

MORE TO THE STORY: A REAPPRAISAL OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE  
PRIOR TO THE PACIFIC WAR

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree.

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Military History and Strategy

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

2007

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 16-06-2006		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) Aug 2005 - Jun 2006	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE  More to the Story: A Reappraisal of U.S. Intelligence Prior to the Pacific War				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)  LCDR James R. Stobie, USN				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD 1 Reynolds Ave. Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT Early on Sunday, 7 December 1941, the air and naval forces of the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the U.S. Pacific Fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) recorded the day as "a date which will live in infamy" in his speech to a joint session of Congress. Subsequent investigations and histories judged U.S. intelligence as unprepared in its failure to predict the attack at Pearl Harbor. Yet FDR also listed the other locations Japan attacked in those first twenty-four hours starting with the attack at Kota Bharu in Malaya. Reviewing U.S. intelligence estimates and "war warning" messages against Imperial Japanese war plans and actions, U.S. intelligence understood Imperial Japan's intentions and plans far better than is recorded. Of the places listed in the 27 November 1941 "war warning"--"the Philippines, Thai or Kra [Malay] Peninsula and possibly Borneo"--two were attacked on that first day of war and the last, Borneo, a week later. On that first day of war, Japan also attacked Guam, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Wake and Midway Islands, the latter two reinforced against impending war with Japan in early December 1941 by U.S. aircraft carriers. The surprise of the attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet overshadows the accuracy of U.S. intelligence estimates prior to the					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Pacific War, Intelligence, Japan, Strategy, South, Communications Intelligence					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	UU	96	

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

More to the Story: A Reappraisal of U.S. Intelligence Prior to the Pacific War, by LCDR James R. Stobie, U.S.N., 75 pages.

Early on Sunday, 7 December 1941, the air and naval forces of the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the U.S. Pacific Fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) recorded the day as “a date which will live in infamy” in his speech to a joint session of Congress. Subsequent investigations and histories judged U.S. intelligence as unprepared in its failure to predict the attack at Pearl Harbor. Yet FDR also listed the other locations Japan attacked in those first twenty-four hours starting with the attack at Kota Bharu in Malaya. Reviewing U.S. intelligence estimates and “war warning” messages against Imperial Japanese war plans and actions, U.S. intelligence understood Imperial Japan’s intentions and plans far better than is recorded. Of the places listed in the 27 November 1941 “war warning”--“the Philippines, Thai or Kra [Malay] Peninsula and possibly Borneo”--two were attacked on that first day of war and the last, Borneo, a week later. On that first day of war, Japan also attacked Guam, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Wake and Midway Islands, the latter two reinforced against impending war with Japan in early December 1941 by U.S. aircraft carriers. The surprise of the attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet overshadows the accuracy of U.S. intelligence estimates prior to the Pacific War.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank and offer my most sincere appreciation to the multiple historians that offered their time to discuss U.S. intelligence prior to the start of the Pacific War. As a student of history, it was an honor and privilege to speak with the following established historians: Thomas Fleming, Dr. Donald M. Goldstein, David Kahn, Stephen Budiansky, Dr. George Victor, Akira Iriye, Mark Peattie and Daniel Martinez of the U.S.S. *Arizona* National Memorial. I would like to thank the research librarians of the Combined Arms Research Library. Special appreciation belongs to Dr. John Kuehn and Dr. Jonathan House for their guidance, editing, and counsel. The greatest experience during this year has not been writing about a topic I hold dear but learning the craft of being a historian from these two gentlemen. I owe much to my wife and daughters for tolerating the piles of books and papers strewn about the house, the repetitive discussions about intelligence and Pearl Harbor and hours away from home at the library. None of this would have been worthwhile if it were not for the love of my daughters Isabelle, Sophie, and Grace and my wife Kelly.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all of the intelligence professionals supporting U.S. policy prior to the start of the Pacific War. Many continued to work in intelligence during one of the costliest wars in history, allowing for remarkable victories including the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway. Others in the Navy returned to the unrestricted line community and served with distinction as combat commanders.

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## ACRONYMS

AWS	Air Warning System
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COI	Office of the Coordinator of Information
COMINT	Communications Intelligence
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
DNI	Director of Naval Intelligence, U.S. Navy
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
IGHQ	Imperial General Headquarters
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
IJN	Imperial Japanese Navy
NEI	Netherlands East Indies
ONI	Office of Naval Intelligence
OP-12	Office of Naval Intelligence, U.S. Navy
OP-16	War Plans Division, U.S. Navy
OP-20	Office of Naval Communications, U.S. Navy
OP-20-G	Security Section, Office of Naval Communications, U.S. Navy
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
SIS	Signal Intelligence Service
USAFFE	United States Armed Forces--Far East
WPD	War Plans Division



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Yesterday, December 7, 1941--a date which will live in infamy--the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by the naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan . . . . The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces . . . . Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya.  
Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.  
Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam.  
Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.  
Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island. And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway.  
Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area.<sup>1</sup>

President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
before Congress, 8 December 1941

When we remember Pearl Harbor, what do we forget?<sup>2</sup>

Waldo H. Heinrichs Jr.  
from "Pearl Harbor in a Global Context"

Waldo Heinrichs identifies the American obsession with Pearl Harbor that neglects the other attacks by Japanese forces on the first day of the Pacific War. The "date which will live in infamy," 7 December 1941, is based on the time of the attack at Pearl Harbor and when it was reported to Washington, DC. The better reference point is Tokyo, Japan, capital of the empire striking Allied possessions throughout Southeast Asia: 8 December 1941. Contrary to popular opinion, the attack at Pearl Harbor was not the first attack in the campaign; at 1245 on 8 December 1941 (Tokyo time), Imperial Japanese forces and British forces in Malaya engaged each other at Kota Bharu.<sup>3</sup> This corresponds to 0545 on 7 December 1941 (Honolulu time), nearly two hours before the

Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor.<sup>4</sup> The naval air forces of the Imperial Japanese Navy caught the U.S. Pacific Fleet by surprise on 8 December 1941 (Tokyo time), but while this attack surprised the admirals and generals in Hawaii and the Philippines, the beginning of hostilities between Japan and the U.S. did not.

War loomed on the Pacific horizon as 1941 drew to a close. As the European war spread to the Soviet Union following Nazi Germany's invasion, armed conflict grew more likely between two great naval powers in the largest maritime environment: the Pacific Ocean. Japanese expansion through French Indochina and the war in China strained diplomatic relations between Imperial Japan and the United States. The resulting embargoes and the freezing of Japanese assets by the U.S., the United Kingdom and the Netherlands greatly impacted Imperial Japan's economy and military. Despite resources arising from lean budgets during the interwar years, U.S. intelligence worked tirelessly to update the strategic estimate of Imperial Japan's intentions.

Imperial Japan both conducted diplomatic negotiations with the United States and planned for an offensive to start on 8 December 1941 (Tokyo time). The Imperial Navy, through politics and force of will, married simultaneous operations throughout Southeast Asia to an attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor in Oahu, Hawaii. The surprise attack at Pearl Harbor started the transformation of a nation resistant to direct involvement in foreign wars--there were incidents between American warships escorting convoys of supplies to England and German U-boats--into a global superpower. Referred as a sneak attack, the mantra "Remember Pearl Harbor" would rally a nation now confronted with a 'shooting' war.

The shock of the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor sparked multiple investigations into how the United States and its Pacific Fleet could have been caught so unawares. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued a presidential executive order to establish the first of many investigations: The Roberts Commission. Named after the head member, Associate Justice Owen J. Roberts of the Supreme Court, this investigation lasted from 18 December 1941 to 23 January 1942 and cleared the President, secretaries of war and navy and senior military leaders while censuring Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and Lieutenant General Walter C. Short.<sup>5</sup> Subsequent investigations included: the Hart Inquiry conducted on order by the Navy Department by Admiral Thomas C. Hart, U.S.N. (Retired), from 15 February to 15 June 1944, the Army Pearl Harbor Board from 20 July to 20 October 1944, the Naval Court of Inquiry from 24 July to 19 October 1944, the Clausen investigation conducted at the personal direction of the Secretary of War by Major Henry C. Clausen, U.S. Army, from 23 November 1944 to 12 September 1945, the Clarke Investigation into the handling of top secret communications intelligence conducted Colonel Carter W. Clarke, U.S. Army, from 14 to 16 September 1944 and 13 July to 4 August 1945, and the Joint Congressional Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack from 15 November 1945 to 31 May 1946.<sup>6</sup> These investigations did not settle the issue regarding the attack at Pearl Harbor and U.S. intelligence. The attack continues to be the source of historic controversy and intelligence studies continue to use the attack at Pearl Harbor as an example of strategic surprise. Chapter 11, titled “Hindsight--and Foresight,” of *The 9/11 Commission Report* opens with a reference to the attack at Pearl Harbor.<sup>7</sup>

Few histories analyze the attack at Pearl Harbor and the performance of the U.S. intelligence community within the context of the entire Japanese campaign that initiated a general war in the Pacific. This study will not address in detail the intelligence estimates with regard to the attack at Pearl Harbor, but study the strategic estimates of Japanese intentions in the Pacific as a whole.

The U.S. intelligence community was not without fault in the months prior to the onset of the Pacific War. Within the Navy, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI or OP-16) would be marginalized into an organization focused narrowly on collection and dissemination. Evaluation of information would reside within the Navy's War Plans Division (OP-12), headed by Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner. The Office of Naval Communications (OP-20) attempted unsuccessfully to assume the responsibility for all dissemination of any evaluated communications intelligence given that it collected the information ONI would translate and evaluate. Outside of the Navy, ONI lost additional missions to other federal organizations, including domestic surveillance to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and foreign human intelligence assets to William Donovan and the future Office of Strategic Services. Despite these limitations, the Navy accurately predicted Japanese intentions with the Western Pacific, though not necessarily by those organizations and officers formally tasked with doing so.

On 27 November 1941 (Washington, DC, time), the Navy Department released a message addressed to naval forces in the Pacific:

This dispatch is to be considered a war warning . . . an aggressive move by Japan is expected within the next few days. The number and equipment of Japanese troops and the organizations of the naval task forces indicates an amphibious expedition against either the Philippines, Thai or Kra peninsula or possibly Borneo.<sup>8</sup>

This “war warning” is often cited as missing the impending attack at Pearl Harbor; however, the histories and intelligence studies do not note three of the four listed places--the Philippines, Thailand and Malaya, and the Kra Peninsula--were invaded the same day as the attack on Pearl Harbor. All the locations in the war warning would be invaded within a week of the beginning of the campaign. Within the naval intelligence community of today, this report meets many of the Navy’s “key attributes” of a good intelligence report: timeliness, usability, availability, accuracy, and relevance.<sup>9</sup>

Many positive changes within the U.S. intelligence community resulted from the Pearl Harbor-centric view, including the development within the Navy of an intelligence officer community. The corollary to these positive benefits is the continual misrepresentation of the attack at Pearl Harbor and the role of intelligence in the time period leading towards the Pacific War. Popular opinions, not based on evidence, are often the mantra when referring to the attack.

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<sup>1</sup>President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, *Address to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War with Japan*, 8 December 1941, <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/oddec7.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Waldo H. Heinrichs, Jr. “Pearl Harbor in a Global Context” in *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, ed. Robert W. Love Jr. (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 103.

<sup>3</sup>John Costello, *The Pacific War* (New York, NY: William Morrow and Co., 1982), 131.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton, U.S.N. (Ret.), Captain Roger Pineau, U.S.N.R. (Ret.) and John Costello, *“And I Was There”: Pearl Harbor and Midway--Breaking the Secrets* (New York, NY: William Morrow and Co., 1985), 511-512.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 512–516.

<sup>7</sup>National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, No date), 339-340.

<sup>8</sup>Gordon W. Prange, Donald W. Goldstein, and Katherine V. Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1981), 406.

<sup>9</sup>Department of the Navy, Naval Doctrine Publication (NDP) 2: *Naval Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, No date), 18-20.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE U.S. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY, 1940-1941

The U.S. intelligence community prior to the start of the Pacific War lacked coherence. A coordinated and rational intelligence organization arose with the birth of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) after World War II.<sup>1</sup> Instead, there were several semi-independent organizations, each competing for the same resources and information, and often with overlapping responsibilities and functions. During the interwar period, U.S. intelligence organizations suffered the same budget cuts as their respective services as well as the disdain of their respective service cultures. Critical achievements, such as the breaking of the Purple diplomatic code used by Imperial Japan to communicate between Tokyo and select diplomatic stations worldwide, obscure the immature analytic organizations and even sparser sources of information used by those organizations. Despite all of these hindrances, talented people served and succeeded in critical intelligence positions in the two years before Imperial Japan's opening campaign to secure the resources of Southeast Asia. The president and military knew that war with Japan was on the horizon and that the Japanese' ultimate goal was the natural resources of Southeast Asia. This chapter will discuss two issues germane to understanding the situation: (1) the U.S. intelligence community as it existed on 7 December 1941, and (2) the sources and methods of the U.S. intelligence community.

#### The U.S. Intelligence Community

U.S. intelligence as a function to policymaking received little funding or support during the 1930s and early 1940s as the world slipped towards war.<sup>2</sup> Multiple



government constituencies each maintained their own intelligence service, some with more authority than others. The four dominant U.S. intelligence organizations prior to the start of the Pacific War were: (1) the Army's Military Intelligence Division, referred to as MID or G-2; (2) the Office of Naval Intelligence, referred to as ONI or OP-16; (3) the Federal Bureau of Investigation or FBI, and; (4) the Office of the Coordinator of Information, commonly referred to as the COI. Each organization collected, evaluated and disseminated information to senior leadership within their respective government agency and to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Other entities that acted as collection assets included the military attachés and Office of Naval Communications (OP-20).

What little cooperation existed between agencies often arose from necessity, bureaucratic politics or direction of the president. Both the Army and Navy owned and operated their own Purple decoding machines under Operation MAGIC. Purple was the Japanese diplomatic code for communications between Tokyo and embassies worldwide. For a time, both the Army and the Navy were decrypting, translating and evaluating intercepted messages daily.<sup>3</sup> This placed a great strain on the extremely limited resources of each service. The services developed a system to delineate the responsibilities for decrypting, translating and disseminating communications intelligence. These functions would be handled by each service on alternative days.<sup>4</sup>

President Roosevelt, observing the bureaucratic politics between the the Army and Navy regarding intelligence, sought to unify all the information presented to him.<sup>5</sup> (Figure 1 depicts a simplified hierarchy chart of President Roosevelt and his Cabinet.) The Army and Navy's agreement had the services alternating who would provide the president with copies of translated messages. On 18 June 1941, the president created the

Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI), directed by World War I veteran and close personal friend William “Wild Bill” Donovan, to report directly to him.<sup>6</sup> FDR ordered all facets of the U.S. government to provide any requested information by the COI for analysis by its civilian staff. Many of the analysts supporting the COI were historians or professors with extended experience in their respective areas.<sup>7</sup> This predecessor to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)--which in turn is the predecessor to the CIA--is an example of executive directed cooperation.

Following the formation of the COI, MID and ONI overlooked traditional service animosity to cooperate against an organization they believed to be in competition for access, resources and control.<sup>8</sup> Brigadier General Sherman Miles, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (ACoS, G-2), and Captain Alan Kirk, Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI), submitted a plan for the formation of a joint intelligence board to ensure the services shared intelligence. This is an example of cooperation in support of bureaucratic politics.<sup>9</sup>

General Miles also served as Director of the Military Intelligence Division (MID) in the last years before global war. His primary responsibility was to provide intelligence support to the Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall.<sup>10</sup> (Figure 2 provides a simplified organizational chart of the War Department.) This responsibility focused MID on tracking and analyzing the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA), its intentions and capabilities.<sup>11</sup> General Miles and MID continued as the primary intelligence analysis organization in the Department of War after the outbreak of hostilities.

The Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI or OP-16) did not fare as well within the Department of the Navy as MID did within the War Department. The oldest service intelligence organization, it traditionally provided analyzed intelligence to the

Department of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). (Figure 3 displays a simplified organizational chart of the Navy Department.) ONI's primary target was the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN).<sup>12</sup> In 1940 and 1941 the organization faced many problems that greatly influenced its ability as a cohesive unit. Individuals, such as Commander McCollum of the Far East Division or Lieutenant Commander Kramer working in the Office of Naval Communications intelligence section (OP-20-G), would bring great credit to ONI.

The largest threat ONI faced was the bureaucratic infighting with other divisions under the CNO. The Director of the War Plans Division (WPD or OP-12), Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly "Terrible" Turner, believed his organization should analyze all intelligence that might affect operations of the various fleets. Conversely, the Director of Naval Communications (OP-20) believed OP-20 personnel should disseminate communications intelligence, though ONI personnel translated and analyzed the information. Admiral Turner succeeded in subverting ONI with the aid of the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll, Admiral Turner's predecessor as the Director of WPD. Admirals Turner and Ingersoll and Captain Kirk met with Admiral Harold R. "Betty" Stark, CNO and after hearing the two admirals' arguments and the captain's rebuttal, Admiral Stark ordered that WPD would be responsible for intelligence analysis. Unfortunately for ONI--especially during the later investigations into the attack at Pearl Harbor--Admiral Stark did not change the Navy's instructions--on paper, ONI was responsible for intelligence analysis. The Director of Naval Communications, Rear Admiral Leigh Noyes, was not successful in taking dissemination of communications intelligence away from ONI until after the events of December 1941.<sup>13</sup>

Another critical problem ONI faced was the continual changes in leadership. In the two years prior to the Pacific War, there were four directors. There were three in 1941 alone. Captain Kirk would serve only eight months in the billet.<sup>14</sup> Kirk had just returned from London as the naval attaché, so he possessed some experience with naval intelligence. While continuing to fight against other directors, Kirk attempted to modify ONI into a mirror image of the Royal Navy intelligence system.<sup>15</sup> In addition to Turner's abrasive personality, Kirk's behavior impaired the effectiveness of ONI and left many problems for his relief, Rear Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson. Wilkinson became DNI in October 1941 despite never serving in an intelligence billet prior to becoming DNI. Wilkinson would restore ties with various organizations in his short tenure prior to the attack at Pearl Harbor.

Unlike MID, ONI had the additional task of collecting domestic intelligence, including the inspection of factories and their respective workers.<sup>16</sup> When RAINBOW 5, the war plan to replace ORANGE, was released, many of the intelligence support tasks for the operational commanders were subordinated to competing domestic and disseminating requirements, often believed to be the influence of Admiral Turner.<sup>17</sup>

The other two U.S. intelligence organizations were the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), under the direction of J. Edgar Hoover, and the aforementioned COI, under the direction of "Wild Bill" Donovan. The FBI mirrored many of the domestic responsibilities of ONI. Subversive actions taken by Axis sympathizers received the greatest attention. The primary source for the FBI's investigations was telephone taps, something ONI and FBI competed over, especially in Hawaii.<sup>18</sup> The Army and Navy found the COI to be an encroachment on their responsibilities.

It is significant to note that this ramshackle intelligence system was later identified as a major contributor to the inability of U.S. intelligence to predict the attack at Pearl Harbor. The formation of the Central Intelligence Agency, it was hoped, would serve to correct this state of affairs. Many historians often miss that each military intelligence organization actually correctly assessed the strategic intent of the IJA and IJN prior to the opening attacks. The organizations knew war was on the horizon; they knew the Japanese sought the natural resources of Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific. What they did not know were the operational details.

#### Sources and Methods for U.S. Intelligence

The U.S. intelligence community possessed very few sources in those last years of peace prior to the Pacific War. Funding during the interwar period greatly limited the collection capabilities of the various organizations. The primary sources for U.S. intelligence would be communications intelligence and reports from ambassadors and attachés. Sources such as human or photographic intelligence were not fully developed prior to the Pacific War and would not mature in time to expand U.S. intelligence understanding about Japanese intentions.<sup>19</sup>

Historian David Kahn, in describing the “intelligence failure of Pearl Harbor,” listed the lack of high placed operatives and other human intelligence sources as a major impediment to the quality of U.S. estimates prior to the attack at Pearl Harbor.<sup>20</sup> Intelligence gathering of this nature requires extensive planning and a great deal of lead time before developing any useful informants, especially in closely guarded societies such as Imperial Japan. The breaking of Japanese diplomatic codes, the disdain for the craft of intelligence and the monetary and political expense served to limit risky

intelligence gathering operations such as recruiting high-level officials. The decision not to develop these sources is not one for the intelligence professional, but the policymaker.

As for photographic intelligence, it was extremely limited and eventually curtailed almost completely prior to the war. Photographic reconnaissance was not permitted in the vicinity of the Japanese home and mandated islands.<sup>21</sup> U.S. administrations wished to avoid any measure that might be considered militarily provocative while diplomatic negotiations continued. The primary source of photographic information came from attachés, military observers and reserve officers serving onboard merchant shipping doing business within Japan. Relations between Japan and the United States continued to degrade over China and the IJA's expansion in Indochina. The Japanese authorities began to severely limit where military attachés could go and with whom they could speak.<sup>22</sup> Following the total embargoes on oil and other war materials to Japan, U.S. merchantmen no longer visited Japanese ports or witnessed IJN exercises at sea.

Ambassadors, attachés and military observers provided one of the greatest sources of information and were only eclipsed by communications intelligence in importance. Ambassador Joseph C. Grew provided much detailed information about the culture and situation in Imperial Japan. When testifying to Congress, General Miles highlighted Ambassador Grew's reports.<sup>23</sup> Attachés and military ambassadors provided detailed information on the performance of both personnel and equipment within the Imperial Japanese military. Unfortunately, many of the material or performance reports on the IJA or IJN were discounted by stateside intelligence agencies under the prevailing racist

views held by most Americans regarding the Japanese, including both intelligence producers and consumers.<sup>24</sup>

Communications intelligence or “COMINT” provided the greatest wealth of information to the military intelligence organizations prior to the Pacific War. COMINT, as a field of intelligence, rose during the First World War and would regain prominence during the Second World War. Unfortunately, during the interwar years, the U.S. system suffered under budget cuts and political views. Historians have noted the irony of Secretary of State Stimson effectively abolishing the system, stating that “gentlemen don’t read each others’ mail,” only to reverse his position while serving in FDR’s Cabinet at Secretary of War.<sup>25</sup>

Under COMINT, there are two critically different methods: traffic analysis and cryptanalysis. Traffic analysis accounted for much of the analysis on Japanese warship movements. The IJN’s primary system for encrypting messages was the JN-25b code. Before 7/8 December 1941, it prevented any exploitation of intercepted messages. Radio direction finding, call sign recognition and ‘tapping’ recognition--the ability of a trained observer to distinguish the difference between different radio operators--allowed U.S. intelligence officers to predict IJN movements. The two primary stations for this method were those at Cavite--later Corregidor--in the Philippines and at Honolulu, Hawaii. Commander Joseph J. Rochefort, commander of the communications intelligence unit in Hawaii, provided such detailed reports using traffic analysis that they later were used by both Lieutenant Commander Edwin T. Layton, the U.S. Pacific Fleet’s intelligence officer under Admirals Richardson, Pye and Nimitz, and ONI.<sup>26</sup>

Cryptanalysis--the exploitation of another's codes to read the encrypted messages--became an invaluable asset for the United States in its policy making vis-a-vis Japan during the interwar period. Herbert O. Yardley and the "Black Chamber" exploited messages between Japan and its delegation during the negotiations of the Washington Treaty. Originally working under the State Department, Yardley and the Black Chamber would transfer to the Signal Intelligence Service (SIS) to the War Department when Secretary of State Stimson closed the office. The War and Navy Departments continued to maintain the advantage of reading Japanese coded messages. The focus for exploitation would be the diplomatic codes, such as Purple under Operation MAGIC. Working with the limited COMINT resources prior to the Pacific War, efforts continued on the decrypting, translating and evaluating diplomatic cables. Efforts to break the Imperial Japanese operational codes were limited.<sup>27</sup>

While many of the messages collected for exploitation were gathered from various high frequency (HF) radio stations throughout the Pacific and Pacific coast, U.S. intelligence organizations developed ties with civilian cable companies to receive copies of traffic sent by ocean cable. Ensign Takeo Yoshikawa, the IJN officer collecting on the defenses about Pearl Harbor and the Pacific Fleet while working at the Honolulu consulate, transmitted his reports amongst the Consul General's traffic via civilian companies. Not all U.S. companies cooperated, leaving gaps in collection.<sup>28</sup> Both ONI and the FBI collected domestic intelligence via telephone taps, occasionally conflicting with each other. FBI wire taps would discover possible coded conversations with Japanese Americans days before the attack at Pearl Harbor.



Imperial Japan began to greatly curtail the movements of the U.S. ambassador and attachés in Japan as relations between the two nations began to degrade. Ambassador Grew and the attachés continued to provide limited information of great value. In addition to the ambassador and attachés in Japan, the ambassadors and attachés throughout Southeast Asia and the southwest Pacific provided important information regarding Japanese capabilities and possible information gathering for future operations.

A final method of collecting information and obtaining analysis came from writers and the press.<sup>29</sup> Authors like Hector C. Bywater and William D. Puleston, a former DNI, wrote about conflict in the Pacific and the forces that would fight.<sup>30</sup> Pacific relations journals editorialized about the possibility of conflict between Imperial Japan and the United States. Press reports provided additional information and informal analysis of Japanese capabilities and intentions.

The United States did not possess a coherent intelligence policy or community when it entered the Second World War. Decades of diminished budgets, sidelining by policymakers, and various independent and often overlapping organizations impeded access to information, limited the effectiveness of analysis and complicated access to policymakers. War between the Empire of Japan and the United States of America loomed on the horizon. Information from various sources poured into different organizations with the occasional overlap in responsibilities. From the same information, the War Department focused on the Imperial Japanese Army while the Navy Department focused on the Imperial Japanese Navy. No effort in joint intelligence existed until FDR ordered the formation of the Coordinator of Information under “Wild Bill” Donovan. Intelligence professionals, such as William Friedman, were the exception. U.S.

intelligence, trying to understand the closed society of Imperial Japan, with diminished budgets from the Depression, and a defense policy focused on the war in Europe, worked with many strikes against it.

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<sup>1</sup>David Kahn quotes former President Herbert Hoover from a 1955 report of the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of Government: “The CIA may well attribute its existence to the attack on Pearl Harbor.” David Kahn, “The Intelligence Failure of Pearl Harbor,” *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 5 (winter 1991-1992): 151.

<sup>2</sup>Lieutenant Commander Ralph Lee DeFalco, III, U.S.N., “Blind to the Sun,” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 16 (2003): 96.

<sup>3</sup>There are many sources discussing in detail Operation MAGIC and PURPLE. David Kahn discusses the Operation MAGIC and PURPLE in the first chapter, “One Day of Magic” in his book *The Codebreakers* (New York, NY: MacMillian Publishing Co., Inc., 1963), 1-67. Other sources include: Michael Smith. *The Emperor’s Codes: The Breaking of Japan’s Secret Ciphers*. (New York, NY: Arcade Publishing, 2000), Hervie Haufler. *Codebreakers’ Victory: How the Allied Cryptographers Won World War II*. (New York, NY: New American Library, 2003), John Prados. *Combined Fleet Decoded: The Secret History of American Intelligence and the Japanese Navy in World War II*. (New York, NY: Random House, 1995) and, for the views of the U.S. Pacific Fleet intelligence officer for Admirals J.O. Richardson (1939-1941), Husband E. Kimmel (1941) and Chester W. Nimitz (1941-1945), Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton, U.S.N. (Ret.) with Captain Roger Pineau, U.S.N.R. (Ret.) and John Costello. “*And I Was There*”: *Pearl Harbor and Midway--Breaking the Secrets*. (New York, NY: Quill, 1985).

<sup>4</sup>Colonel Bruce W. Bidwell, U.S. Army (Ret.), *History of the Military Intelligence Division, Department of the Army General Staff: 1775-1941* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1986), 446.

<sup>5</sup>President Roosevelt first tried to get intelligence to coordinate on 26 June 1939 when he ordered the directors of MID, ONI and the FBI “to function as a committee to coordinate their activities.” Andrew, 91.

<sup>6</sup>Andrew, 100.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid

<sup>8</sup>Andrew, 97; and Dorwart, 153.

<sup>9</sup>General Miles and Captain Kirk recommended to the Joint Board on 14 July 1941 the formation of a Joint Intelligence Center (JIC). The Joint Planning Committee recommended the JIC be “co-equal” to the Joint Planning Committee and approved its formation on 10 September 1941. The JIC was manned shortly afterwards. This same

request, when forwarded to President Roosevelt on 8 September 1939 by then DNI RADM Walter S. Anderson, was not implemented. Captain Wyman H. Packard, U.S.N. (Ret.). *A Century of U.S. Naval Intelligence*. (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1996), 225.

<sup>10</sup>Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), 280-291.

<sup>11</sup>Bidwell, 456.

<sup>12</sup>Wohlstetter, 312-323; Bidwell, 456..

<sup>13</sup>Dorwart, 160; and Packard, 21-22.

<sup>14</sup>Packard, 21.

<sup>15</sup>Dorwart, 140, 147, and 148.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 158.

<sup>18</sup>Bidwell, 445-446.

<sup>19</sup>DeFalco, 97-99.

<sup>20</sup>Kahn, "The Intelligence Failure of Pearl Harbor," 148.

<sup>21</sup>Bidwell, 461-462. It would not be until November 1941 that the first photographic reconnaissance flight of the Japanese mandates would be approved.

<sup>22</sup>DeFalco, 97-99 and Prados, 32.

<sup>23</sup>Wohlstetter, 284.

<sup>24</sup>DeFalco, 95-96.

<sup>25</sup>David Kahn is the most prominent historian to address this, most succinctly in his article "The Intelligence Failure of Pearl Harbor": "The secretary of war was Stimson, who had closed Yardley's unit in 1929 but now welcomed the intercepts. He was not inconsistent: he believed that codebreaking was a legitimate function of a military service but not of a diplomatic one." (143).

<sup>26</sup>For discussion on the location of OP-20-G stations and their personnel, see John Prados. *Combined Fleet Decoded: The Secret History of American Intelligence and the Japanese Navy in World War II*. (New York, NY: Random House, 1995), 174-175.

<sup>27</sup>Kahn's article "The Intelligence Failure of Pearl Harbor" and his first chapter of *The Codebreakers*, titled "One Day of Magic" detail U.S. codebreaking efforts best. Stephen Budiansky's *Battle of Wits: The Complete Story of Codebreaking in World War II*. (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2000) also provides a detailed history of U.S. codebreaking.

<sup>28</sup>Bidwell, 445.

<sup>29</sup>Today, this form of intelligence is referred to Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) and provides analysts valuable information.

<sup>30</sup>Hector C. Bywater, *The Great Pacific War: A History of the American-Japanese Campaign of 1931-33* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1925); and William Dilworth Puleston, *The Armed Forces of the Pacific: A Comparison of the military and naval power of the United States and Japan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1941).

## CHAPTER 3

### IMPERIAL JAPANESE WAR PLANS AND U.S. ESTIMATES

The Empire will . . . crush American, British and Dutch strongholds in East Asia and the Western Pacific . . . and secure major resource areas and lines of communication in order to prepare a posture of long term self-sufficiency. All available methods will be exerted to lure out the main elements of the US fleet at an appropriate time to attack and destroy them.<sup>1</sup>

*Tai Bei-Ei-Ran-Sho senso shumatsu sokushin ni kansuru fukuan,*  
November 1941  
(A Plan for Completion of the War Against the United States,  
Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek)

The military command infrastructure in Imperial Japan complicated the situation for analysts inside the United States. Just as multiple agencies with overlapping responsibilities and competing bureaucracies impeded U.S. intelligence, the military command structure in Imperial Japan did not provide a unified coherent enemy for study. The Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) and Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) competed against each other for funds, often providing opposing strategies at the Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ). Even within the IJN, there was dissention between the Navy General Staff and the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet. Amidst a sea of opposing or ambiguous signals from a closed society with a fractured command structure, U.S. intelligence developed a clear understanding of Japanese intentions for conflict in the Pacific. This chapter will discuss: (1) the Imperial Japanese command structure, including the role of the Emperor, (2) the decision to secure the Southern Resource Area, which included the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), British Malaya and other islands in the Southwest Pacific, (3) the Japanese strategy and operations plan for conquest of the Southern Resource Area, and (4) U.S. intelligence estimates of the Japanese plans.

### Imperial Japanese Command Structure

The emperor ordered the establishment of the Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) on 20 November 1937.<sup>2</sup> The Navy General Staff represented the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) at IGHQ, hoping to impede the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) from dominating military strategy as it had during the wars with China and Russia.<sup>3</sup> The IJN succeeded in maintaining parity within the IGHQ, exercising “a kind of veto over army plans under certain circumstances” when things drifted towards the army.<sup>4</sup> Unlike the United States in 1941, which had the Army Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations, with no higher military authority, and who reported to the President through their respective service secretaries, the Imperial Japanese military had two competing factions for resources and money. David Evans and Mark Peattie described the problem of the IGHQ in their book *Kaigun*: “The IGHQ had no overall chief of staff, or any other holder of ultimate authority.”<sup>5</sup> (Figure 4 depicts the IJN command structure.) Not only did the structure of the IGHQ create problems for U.S. intelligence, but the organization of the IJN itself created problems for future analysis. The parallelism between the U.S. intelligence community--multiple organizations collecting and analyzing to support their parent institutions without an ultimate authority to coordinate efforts--and the Japanese military hierarchy complicated efforts to provide advanced warning to various commands in the Pacific.

Other faults within the high command structures for Imperial Japanese military forces hampered collection or the possibility of collection. Military decisions were made without consideration for “foreign policy, political developments, and economic realities.”<sup>6</sup> The disjointed nature of the Japanese high command led to dangerous

situations. For example, Prime Minister and Army Minister Hideki Tojo only learned about the details of the Hawaii Operation after the war began and the navy minister was informed about the operations plans for Midway only after they were drafted.<sup>7</sup>

### North or South?

Since 1913, the IJN had traditionally planned to fight one enemy at a time. This doctrine created problems as the IJA and IJN sought different directions to expand the Empire of Japan. The IJA supported the goals of *hokushin*--“northward advance”--into areas of Asia held by the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> The hypothetical enemies for the IJA were the Soviet Union and China.<sup>9</sup> The IJN countered the IJA’s policy with a plan for a *nanshin*--“southward advance”--towards the natural resources of Southeast Asia, especially the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). Traditionally, the IJN regarded the United States as its primary enemy; however, starting in the mid-1930’s, colonial European powers, especially the United Kingdom, were added to the list.<sup>10</sup>

The emperor ordered that the IJA and IJN would provide him a “yearly operations plan” in 1907, though the IJN would not provide its first plan until 1914.<sup>11</sup> The Navy Minister Nagano Osami provided “the inner cabinet (of principal ministers) a policy paper . . . General principles of national policy . . . which stressed the strategic importance of the ‘southern areas.’”<sup>12</sup> This proposal came after the expiration of the London Treaty (1935) and Washington Treaty (1936).<sup>13</sup> By the fall of 1936, the ‘Fundamentals of National Policy’ equated in significance the IJN’s *nanshin* with the IJA’s *hokushin*.<sup>14</sup> What many historians regard as the IJN’s budgetary strategy to compete with the IJA for the limited funds available became a potential national strategy for the Empire of Japan.<sup>15</sup>

The IJA regained the forefront of Imperial Japanese foreign policy and national strategy in July 1937 when the Sino-Japanese war began.<sup>16</sup> The IJA's continental strategy regained supremacy; however, the IJN prepared for the possibility of a change in directions. While the IJA fought in China, the IJN began a policy of expanding Japanese control of China's coast and waters by occupying Hainan in February 1939 and the Spratley Islands in March.<sup>17</sup>

During the summer of 1939, the IJA suffered a humiliating defeat by the Soviet Union near the Manchuria-Mongolian border. The battle at Nomonhan caused the IJA to rethink the direction of Japanese expansion.<sup>18</sup> That year, the IJA would include in its Army Operations Plan "surprise attacks on British possessions in Singapore, Malaya, and Borneo."<sup>19</sup> Defeat by the Soviets and successes by the Germans would begin to have massive consequences on Japanese actions and plans that led towards poorer relations with the United States.<sup>20</sup>

### The Decision to Head South

The Southern Resource Area and the areas along the lines of communication between Japan and the NEI belonged to the European colonial powers or the United States.<sup>21</sup> Britain possessed Malaya, Singapore and parts of Borneo. France owned French Indo-China. A portion of today's archipelago nation of Indonesia was then the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). The United States operated in the Philippines. (Figure 5 provides a chart showing the disposition of national boundaries as they existed in 1941 as Imperial Japan decided which direction to take.) The number of nations that would be involved in a conflict for the Southern Resource Area would be contrary to the IJN tradition of fighting only one enemy at a time. A campaign for the Southern Resource



Area would require war with four powers: China (already engaged), the United States, Britain and the Netherlands.<sup>22</sup> (A map of the South-West Pacific and South-East Asia in 1941 is provided in Figure 6.)

The war in Europe and defeat by the Soviet Union at Nomonhan raised support for the IJN plans for movement southward. Imperial Japan sought to both not intervene in the European war and prevent interference of European powers in South-East Asia.<sup>23</sup> The defeat of France by German forces in the summer of 1940, following other rapid victories, provided added support for a move south by making it possible for Japan to pressure the French colonies in Indo-China. Even the IJA associated its end to the war in China with a southern advance.<sup>24</sup> To alleviate the threat from the Soviet Union, Japan signed the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact on 13 April 1941.<sup>25</sup>

### The Decision for War

After decades of regarding each other as their principal enemies, Imperial Japan and the United States began a descent towards opened conflict with the fall of Western Europe--especially France--in the summer of 1940. After its capitulation to Nazi Germany, Vichy France granted occupation rights to northern French Indo-China on 22 September 1940. The myriad of German successes in Europe reduced resistance to involvement in the European War and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact on 27 September 1940.<sup>26</sup>

In the United States, Congress, in response to the conflicts worldwide, passed multiple acts that governed U.S. involvement with the participants in those conflicts. The Neutrality Act of 1939 impeded U.S. support to participants in the wars; however, it did allow for “cash and carry” of military equipment.<sup>27</sup> While the Neutrality Act restricted

President Roosevelt, the Export Control Act, passed in July 1940, authorized him to use economics, especially the sale of equipment and materials that supported military operations, “in the interest of national security.”<sup>28</sup> Watching the naval aspect of the European war as it grew and regarding the IJN as a threat in the Pacific Ocean, Congress also passed multiple acts increasing the size of the Navy, including the Two-Ocean Naval Expansion Act on 19 July 1940.<sup>29</sup> President Roosevelt contributed to tensions between Japan and the United States by ordering the permanent basing of the United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Oahu, in the Hawaiian territory in May 1940.<sup>30</sup> This placed the naval power of the U.S. in the Pacific thousands of miles closer to the Western Pacific.

The first in a series of escalating embargoes followed the Japanese occupation of northern French Indo-China. In July 1940, President Roosevelt restricted the sale of aviation fuel, high-grade scrap iron and steel scrap, for all of which Japan was dependent upon the sales from the United States.<sup>31</sup> FDR added copper and brass to the ban in January 1941.<sup>32</sup> Japanese negotiations with the NEI to compensate for the embargo by the United States failed in 1941.<sup>33</sup> In furthering their southern expansion, Imperial Japan occupied southern French Indo-China in July 1941. The United States, Britain and the Netherlands established a full embargo on Japan in response the same month.<sup>34</sup> The United States also froze Japanese and Chinese assets in the United States the same month.<sup>35</sup>

Ambassador Nomura continued to negotiate with Secretary of State Hull during 1941. Japanese and American demands on one another led to a situation where one of the two nations must either capitulate or go to war. Given the political environment in the United States in 1941, FDR had to wait until Japan made the first move. Japan continued

to negotiate and plan for war, with the Emperor approving the IGHQ war plans on 5 November 1941.

### Imperial Japanese War Plans

Coordinated planning for the conquest of the Southern Resources Area had begun in 1940. Protection of the lines of communication between Japan and the Southern Resources Area required the capture of Malaya, Singapore, Borneo, and the Philippines and the capitulation of Thailand.<sup>36</sup> Four possibilities for the sequence of capture were debated:

1. An attack . . . upon Malaya and the Philippines, after capturing the Netherlands East Indies during the opening phase of hostilities.
2. Advance . . . clockwise along the operations line running from the Philippines to Borneo, Java, Sumatra and Malaya.
3. Advance . . . counter-clockwise along the operations line running from Malaya to Sumatra, Borneo, Java and the Philippines so as to delay the outbreak of war with the United States as long as possible.
4. Attacks . . . on the Philippines and Malaya simultaneously and then successive and swift advances to be made southward along these two lines of operations.<sup>37</sup>

Option (1) left the lines of communication vulnerable by British and American naval and air power. Options (2) and (3) facilitated the strengthening of follow-on objectives as the campaign unfolded. Option (4) was the greatest departure from traditional Japanese planning. Never before had Japanese planners contemplated the dispersing of forces to facilitate the conquest of Malaya, Singapore and Burma and the Philippines and Borneo.<sup>38</sup> Despite the risks, Japanese planners adopted Option (4).

Planners developed three phases for the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which included the seizure of the Southern Resources Area, severing of America's lines of communications to the West Pacific and establishment of

a defensive perimeter to prepare for the battle with U.S. naval forces.<sup>39</sup> The first phase encompassed the destruction of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Hawaiian waters, the capture of the Southern Resource Areas and the seizure of islands and territory to establish a defensive perimeter around Japan and the Southern Resources Area.<sup>40</sup> The defensive perimeter would be strengthened during the second phase. The third phase mirrored traditional Japanese strategy for fighting the U.S. Navy, intercept and destroy any invasion against the perimeter or home islands.<sup>41</sup> (Figure 6 graphically depicts all the elements of the Japanese strategy.)

Japanese planners divided the first phase into three periods. The first period covered the breadth of operations during the first day, all timed for maximum surprise against various positions, and subsequent operations to capture territories critical to the seizure of the Southern Resources Area. In the first twenty-four hours of X Day, the IJA and IJN would: destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Hawaiian waters, force Thailand to surrender or cede bases for further operations against Malaya and Burma, land on the Kra Isthmus for future operations against Singapore, destroy U.S. air power in the Philippines with air attacks, conduct air attacks against Guam and Wake Island in preparation for future operations and invade Hong Kong. Follow-on attacks would include the invasion of Luzon and Mindanao in the Philippines and Borneo.<sup>42</sup> The second and third periods incorporated the completion of the capture of Malaya and Singapore, capture of air bases in Burma, islands of the NEI and strengthening of the perimeter in anticipation of the British or American response.<sup>43</sup>

The subsequent Combined Fleet Operation Order Number 1, issued by Admiral Yamamoto the same day the Emperor approved the plan, outlined the campaign as:

1. In the east the United States Fleet will be destroyed and United States lines of operation and supply lines extending toward the Far East will be cut.
2. In the west, British Malaya will be invaded and the Burma route, British lines of operations and supply lines extending toward the east will be cut.
3. The enemy forces in the Orient will be destroyed and enemy bases of operations and areas rich in natural resources will be captured.
4. A structure for sustained warfare will be established by capturing and exploiting strategic points and by strengthening defense.
5. The enemy forces will be intercepted and crushed.
6. Battle successes will be exploited, thereby destroying the morale of the enemy.<sup>44</sup>

With regard to the Carrier Striking Force, not all copies of the order delineated how they would destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Some copies list only “the first method of operation against the US Fleet” without any outline of the operations.<sup>45</sup> Details on the attack at Pearl Harbor were provided only to those who needed to know.<sup>46</sup>

#### U.S. Intelligence Estimates of Imperial Japan’s Intentions

The disparate organizations of the U.S. intelligence community collected a volume of data regarding Japanese intentions. As discussed before, only Japanese diplomatic codes could be decoded and translated under Operation MAGIC. Any messages transmitted in the Navy’s JN-25b code were saved for use in breaking the code and future decryption; however, these messages provided details for traffic analysis. While the United States did not fly any reconnaissance flights over many of its island holdings in the Central to Western Pacific, flights in the vicinity of the Philippines and by the British in the South China Sea occurred routinely.

The debate over the direction of Japan’s movement continued in the United States. Admiral Turner and MID believed the Japanese would move north while ONI believed the Japanese would head south. Supporting the northern advance were the cables

between Tokyo and Berlin. However, the Japanese ambassador to Germany, Oshima, consistently sought to know what Japan's intentions were with regard to the Soviet Union, pushing the cause for a second front against the Soviet Union. Much like the envoys actively negotiating inside the U.S., Japan never instructed Oshima on the direction or plans of movement. They were only warned that war would come sooner than expected.<sup>47</sup>

Negotiations between the United States and Japan continued into November 1941. As the end of the month grew closer, no one doubted war between Japan and the U.S. would begin soon. Both the War and Navy Departments sent messages; however, the Navy Department's message of 24 November 1941 discussed the breadth of information regarding the Japanese intentions and plans:

CHANCES OF FAVORABLE OUTCOME OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH JAPAN VERY DOUBTFUL X THIS SITUATION COUPLED WITH STATES OF JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND MOVEMENTS THEIR NAVAL AND MILITARY FORCES INDICATE IN OUR OPINION THAT A SURPRISE AGGRESSIVE MOVEMENT IN ANY DIRECTION INCLUDING ATTACK ON PHILIPPINES OR GUAM IS A POSSIBILITY X CHIEF OF STAFF HAS SEEN THIS DISPATCH AND CONCURS AND REQUESTS ACTION ADEES TO INFORM SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS THEIR AREAS X UTMOST SECRECY NECESSARY IN ORDER NOT TO COMPLICATE AN ALREADY TENSE SITUATION OR PRECIPITATE JAPANESE ACTION X GUAM WILL BE INFORMED SEPARATELY<sup>48</sup>

Significant to note is the mention of the Philippines and Guam. Though warning of an attack "in any direction" covers a variety of possibilities, it highlights the confusion by U.S. intelligence on the direction of movement for Japan: north against the Soviet Union or south against the Dutch and British.

Negotiations deteriorated more between the 24th and 27th of November.

Additional reports of Japanese ships moving south towards the Gulf of Siam and further analysis led to another war warning to be sent on 27 November 1941:

THIS DISPATCH IS TO BE CONSIDERED A WAR WARNING X  
NEGOTIATIONS WITH JAPAN LOOKING TOWARD STABILIZATION OF  
CONDITIONS IN THE PACIFIC HAVE CEASED AND AN AGGRESSIVE  
MOVE BY JAPAN IS EXPECTED WITH THE NEXT FEW DAYS X THE  
NUMBER AND EQUIPMENT OF JAPANESE TROOPS AND THE  
ORGANIZATION OF NAVAL TASK FORCES INDICATES AN  
AMPHIBIOUS EXPEDITION AGAINST EITHER THE PHILIPPINES THAI  
OR KRA PENINSULA OR POSSIBLY BORNEO X EXECUTE AN  
APPROPRIATE DEFENSIVE DEPLOYMENT PREPARATORY TO  
CARRYING OUT THE TASKS ASSIGNED IN WPL46 X INFORM DISTRICT  
AND ARMY AUTHORITIES X A SIMILAR WARNING IS BEING SENT BY  
WAR DEPARTMENT X SPENAVO INFORM BRITISH<sup>49</sup>

Admirals Stark and Turner thought the inclusion of “war warning” highlighted the significance of the situation between the United States and Japan.<sup>50</sup> The use of such language had never before been recorded.

Admiral Kimmel, in response to these messages, ordered reconnaissance flights to the south of Pearl Harbor. Japanese submarines were his primary concern. Kimmel also ordered the reinforcing of Wake and Midway Islands. Rear Admiral William “Bull” Halsey departed Pearl Harbor on a wartime footing, much like U.S. ships in the Atlantic had already been sailing. Though no formal war had been declared, Halsey would not wait for Japan to fire the first shot if he encountered their forces.<sup>51</sup> Admiral Thomas Hart, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Asiatic Fleet, maneuvered his ships to keep them outside of range of Japanese aircraft on Formosa.

Both Washington and commanders in the Pacific knew war with Japan was on the horizon and that its goal was the resources of the South-West Pacific.

Both the American and Japanese high commands were complex and at times disharmonious systems of managing the military power of their respective nations. The American intelligence community, underfunded, undermanned and managing potential conflicts in two oceans, collected information and analyzed for the Japanese intentions in the Far East and Western Pacific. The fractured IGHQ observed rivalry between the IJA and IJN over which direction the Empire of Japan should expand. As tensions increased between the United States and Japan, access to intelligence information for the United States greatly diminished. Despite great secrecy within the IJA, IJN and IGHQ, the United States not only knew that war between the United States and Japan loomed on the horizon, they understood the direction of Japanese movement. Even though the Japanese kept their ambassadors uninformed about plans for conquest, the United States formulated detailed warnings in late November 1941 regarding the Japanese. These warnings gave accurate indications concerning the Japanese intentions.

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<sup>1</sup>Hattori Takushiro, *Dai Toa senso zenshi* (A Complete History of the Greater East Asian War) (Tokyo, 1953), 283. Shiroyo-shu (Documents of Annual War Plans of the Imperial Japanese Navy). (Tokyo, 1986), quoted in Ikuhiko Hata, "Admiral Yamamoto's Surprise Attack and the Japanese Navy's War Strategy" in *From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima: The Second World War in Asia and the Pacific, 1941-45* ed. Saki Dockrill (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 68.

<sup>2</sup>David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 458.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 460.



<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Peter Wetzler, *Hirohito and War: Imperial Tradition and Military Decision Making in Prewar Japan* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 21.

<sup>9</sup>Evans and Peattie, 448, list the Soviet Union as the primary enemy with China being the secondary enemy.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Wetzler, 18.

<sup>12</sup>Evans and Peattie, 449.

<sup>13</sup>Sumio Hatano and Sadao Asada, "The Japanese Decision to Move South (1939-1941)" in *Paths to War: New Essays on the Origins of the Second World War* ed. Robert Boyce and Esmonde M. Robertson (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 384.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, 384-385.

<sup>15</sup>Hatano and Asada describe the IJN's southern strategy as "little more than a budgetary strategy, conceived in order to rationalize and win support for a naval arms build-up." (384) Ronald H. Spector in *Eagle Against the Sun* states: "Like the United States navy, the Imperial Japanese Navy had used the danger of a war in the Pacific as a budgetary and bureaucratic weapon." (Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1985), 77)

<sup>16</sup>Hatano and Asada, 385.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Timothy Neeno, "Nomonhan: The Second Russo-Japanese War." <http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/20thcentury/articles/nomonhan.aspx>

<sup>19</sup>Wetzler, 25.

<sup>20</sup>Neeno and Hatano and Asada, 386-387.

<sup>21</sup>Evans and Peattie, 448.

<sup>22</sup>Evans and Peattie, 450-452.

<sup>23</sup>Hatano and Asada, 386.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, 386-387.

<sup>25</sup>David H. James, *The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire* (London, UK: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1951), 188.

<sup>26</sup>Evans and Peattie, 462; and James, 188. Ties between Germany and Japan facilitated the German commerce raider *Atlantis* to port in Kobe on 4 December 1940. Onboard were British documents, captured from the steamer *Automedon* sunk by *Atlantis*, detailing Britain's inability to oppose Japanese aggression in South-East Asia. (Haruo Tohmatsu and H. P. Willmott. *A Gathering Darkness: The Coming of War to the Far East and the Pacific, 1921-1942*. (Lanham, MD: SR Books, 2004), 90.)

<sup>27</sup>Naval History Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, *United States Naval Chronology, World War II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1955), accessed at <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/chr/chr39-11.html>

<sup>28</sup>Naval History Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, *United States Naval Chronology, World War II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1955), accessed at <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/chr/chr40-06.html>. The first use would be on 25 July 1940 when President Roosevelt ordered the cessation of petroleum, petroleum products and scrap metal sales to Japan. Protest from Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles forced the bans reduction to aviation gas and "No. 1 heavy melting iron and steel scrap." Multiple formal protests by Japan would go unanswered. (Michael Gannon, 71.)

<sup>29</sup>Naval History Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, *United States Naval Chronology, World War II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1955), accessed at <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/chr/chr40-06.html> and <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/chr/chr40-07.html>, and Haruo Tohmatsu and H. P. Willmott, 83.

<sup>30</sup>Ronald H. Spector. *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*. (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1985), 1.

<sup>31</sup>Hatano and Asada, 391.

<sup>32</sup>H. P. Willmott. *Empires in the Balance: Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies to April 1942*. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 63.

<sup>33</sup>Military History Section, Headquarters, Armed Forces Far East. Japanese Monograph Number 147. *Political Strategy Prior to Outbreak of War, Part III*. [http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/147/147chap1.html#Major Developments in Japan's State Policy](http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/147/147chap1.html#Major%20Developments%20in%20Japan's%20State%20Policy)

<sup>34</sup>Tohmatsu and Willmott, 87.

<sup>35</sup>Naval History Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, *United States Naval Chronology, World War II* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1955), accessed at <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/chr/chr41-07.html>.

<sup>36</sup>Spector, 82 and Major-General S. Woodburn Kirby with Captain C. T. Addis, Colonel J. F. Meiklejohn, Colonel G. T. Wards and Air Vice-Marshal N. L. Desoer. *The War Against Japan*. Volume I: The Loss of Singapore. (London, UK: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1957), 90.

<sup>37</sup>Military History Section, Headquarters, Armed Forces Far East. Japanese Monograph Number 150. *Political Strategy Prior to Outbreak of War, Part IV*. <http://ibiblio.org/pha/monos/150/150chap1.html>

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 90-91, and Evans and Peattie, *passim*.

<sup>39</sup>Kirby, Addis, Meiklejohn, Wards and Desoer, 91-92, and Naval Analysis Division, United States Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific). *The Campaigns of the Pacific War*. (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, na), 3. Evans and Peattie, 477-479.

<sup>40</sup>The attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Hawaiian waters with four carriers was not approved until October 1941. A month later, controversy over this attack would rise when Admiral Yamamoto insisted that all six of the fleet carriers be used in the operation. Evans and Peattie note that successful tests to modified Zeroes for the flight from Taiwan to the Philippines and back prevented the cancellation of the Hawaii Operation. (Hata, 64 and Evans and Peattie, 478-479)

<sup>41</sup>Kirby, Addis, Meiklejohn, Wards and Desoer, 91.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 91-93.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>44</sup>Military History Section, Headquarters, United States Army Forces Far East. Japanese Monograph No. 152. *Political Strategy Prior to Outbreak of War, Part V*. <http://ibiblio.org/pha/monos/152/152app01.html>

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, Chart 1.

<sup>46</sup>Japan's opening campaign is remembered most in the United States by its daring raid against the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor; however, the attack is often misidentified. The attack was not on Pearl Harbor, but on the Pacific Fleet. Though the first mention of a "possible attack on U.S. forces in Hawai'i" is mentioned in the 1940 Navy Operation Plan, the attack on the Pacific Fleet is the brainchild of Admiral Yamamoto. (Wetzler, 26) Its approval was much debated and not finalized until October 1941. In November 1941, Yamamoto raised the debate again when he asked for all six fleet carriers. Successful tests of longer range Zeroes on Formosa, to provide escort for Japanese bombers attacking the Philippines, prevented the scrapping of the attack. (Evans and Peattie, 577-579.)

<sup>47</sup>Sadao Asada, *From Mahan to Pearl Harbor: The Imperial Japanese Navy and the United States* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 266-270.

<sup>48</sup>Robert B. Stinnett, *Day of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbor* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2000), 291.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 293.

<sup>50</sup>With regards to the attack at Pearl Harbor, U.S. intelligence assessments of the Japanese capabilities to conduct an attack at Pearl Harbor matched those of Minoru Genda, who conducted an assessment on the feasibility the “Pearl Harbor Operation.” (Minoru Genda. “Analysis No. 1 of the Pearl Harbor Attack, Operation AI” and “Analysis No 2 of the Pearl Harbor Attack” in *The Pearl Harbor Papers: Inside the Japanese Plans* eds. Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon. (McLean, VA: Brassey’s, 1993), 17-31 and 32-44.) Ikuhiko Hata notes the same deficiencies in his article “Admiral Yamamoto’s Surprise Attack and the Japanese Navy’s War Strategy”: “However, at this time [autumn 1940] the Japanese Navy did not possess a single aircraft carrier with the capacity to make it to Hawaii and back without refueling. Nor did it have shallow-water torpedoes which could run at the 15-metre depth of the US battleship fleet’s Pearl Harbor anchorage. Low-level horizontal bombing runs had demonstrated a hit ratio of less than 2 per cent. In other words, even if the Navy had wanted to attack Pearl Harbor, it was clear that the conditions for success did not exist.” (Hata, 64).

<sup>51</sup>Robert Love, *History of the United States Navy*, vol. 1, 1775 – 1941 (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992), 663-664.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE PACIFIC WAR BEGINS

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, addressing a joint session of Congress on 8 December 1941, stated, “December 7, 1941--a date which will live in infamy--the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.”<sup>1</sup> Before demanding that “Congress declare . . . a state of war existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire,” the president listed many of the other places Japan attacked on that first day of the Pacific War: Malaya, Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippine Islands, and Wake Island.<sup>2</sup> Unlike President Roosevelt, historian H.P. Willmott asserts “most Western accounts of the campaign in Southeast Asia follow its course from a strictly national viewpoint, with the emphasis that is placed on one theater or aspect of the campaign being to the detriment of an overall view of the struggle.”<sup>3</sup> The attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, which from a Japanese perspective occurred on 8 December 1941, was only one attack out of many “simultaneous operations across 123 degrees of longitude and 58 degrees of latitude.”<sup>4</sup> This chapter will provide a history of the operations within those first twenty-four hours of the Imperial Japanese campaign.

#### The United States Pacific Fleet in Hawaiian Waters

The *Kido Butai*, comprised of the large fleet carriers *Kaga*, *Akagi*, *Soryu*, *Hiryu*, *Shokaku*, and *Zukikaku*, raced south through the night between 6 and 7 December 1941 in order to reach the launching point to ensure the first wave of aircraft would arrive at Pearl Harbor by 0800 Sunday morning. The heavy cruisers *Tone* and *Chikuma* raced ahead to

launch floatplanes for reconnaissance over Pearl Harbor and to verify reports from Japanese submarines that the Pacific Fleet was not at the Lahaina Roads Anchorage off Maui. At 0615, Commander Mitsuo Fuchida launched with the first wave of aircraft: “forty-three Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero-sen fighters, eighty-nine Nakajima B5N2 Kate level-altitude bombers, and eighty-one Aichi D3A2 Val dive bombers.”<sup>5</sup> Approximately thirty minutes later, the second wave of forty Zeros, fifty Kates, and eighty Vals launched. Observing radio silence, the formations flew towards the ninety-six warships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbor.

The Japanese also had a “Special Navy Attack Unit” of five miniature submarines (mini-sub) launched off the decks of I-type submarines of the Advance Expeditionary Force, which approached Pearl Harbor while the larger submarines took positions to attack any ships able to escape the air attack and conduct reconnaissance for the impending aerial attack. The U.S. destroyer *Ward*, after an unsuccessful search based on a periscope sighting nearly four hours before the attack started, attacked and sank a Japanese minisub as it attempted to follow the repair ship U.S.S. *Antares* into Pearl Harbor about the same time the second wave of Japanese aircraft were launching. Two minisubs would make it into harbor; the U.S. destroyer *Monaghan* would sink one during the attack. Two minisubs were sunk before entering port and the remaining minisub beached and was captured.

Fuchida’s strike wave found the ships at Pearl Harbor still at anchor and apparently unaware of the approach of Japanese aircraft. Visibility would interfere with flare signals to indicate who would attack first, fighters or level-altitude bombers. The confusion over the signals would advance the attack time to 0755 on 7 December 1941.

Fuchida communicated to *Kido Butai* that total surprise was achieved with the “‘TO, TO, TO’ signal--an abbreviation for *totsugeki* (‘charge’).”<sup>6</sup> At 0753, the signal “Tora, Tora, Tora” was transmitted.<sup>7</sup>

The Japanese focused on the U.S. Battle Fleet anchored at ‘Battleship Row’ and the various air bases on Oahu--the first bombs dropped by the Japanese were at Ford Island where the U.S. Navy berthed its PBY aircraft, the long-range aircraft that could search for *Kido Butai* if left untouched. In approximately two hours, two waves of Japanese aircraft strafed, bombed or torpedoed ships and aircraft in Pearl Harbor; at anchor, moored, in dry dock, and at the air bases at Bellows, Hickam, Wheeler, Ewa, Ford Island, and Kaneohe.

*Kido Butai* only lost twenty-nine aircraft, ten from the first wave and nineteen from the second. The United States had 2,403 killed and 1,178 wounded, 188 aircraft destroyed and 159 damaged aircraft with eighteen warships either damaged or sunk.<sup>8</sup> Of the battleships, only *Oklahoma*--the first battleship to be lost--and *Arizona*--the most devastating single loss of life--would never return to combat. H.P. Willmott writes in his book *Empires in the Balance* that the damage to the U.S. Pacific Fleet could have been much greater had: (1) the mini subs successfully attacked a warship inside Pearl Harbor, (2) the Japanese pilots attacked many of the smaller vessels and not concentrated on the battleships and cruisers, and (3) Nagumo resumed the attack after the recovery of his aircraft.<sup>9</sup> Despite the heavy loss of life, ships and aircraft, Pearl Harbor’s critical ashore workshops, oil storage, and logistics facilities emerged from the attack almost untouched. The shipyard workers would later raise many of the sunken ships for combat duty later in the Pacific War.<sup>10</sup>

### Thailand (Surrendered: 9 December 1941)

Nearly one hundred degrees to the west and an hour into the attack on the Pacific Fleet, the Imperial Guards Division, detached from the 25th Army to the 15th Army, and the 33rd Infantry Division of the 15th Army started crossing into Thailand--then known as Siam--at 0200 on 8 December. The Imperial Guards Division moved towards Bangkok to force the Thai government to capitulate, which allowed the Japanese to secure northern and central Thailand. Another division continued towards Burma, protecting the flank of the Imperial Guards Division for its subsequent movement south to rejoin the 25th Army along the Thai-Malay border. The light resistance encountered by the invading Japanese forces ceased by 0730. (Figure 7 provides a detailed map of Japanese attacks throughout the South-West Pacific and South-East Asia.)

Imperial Japan conducted amphibious assaults at seven beaches along the Kra Peninsula with six of these in Thailand. The 143rd Infantry Regiment of the 55th Infantry Division, 15th Army, landed in battalion-sized landing forces at four sites along the west coast of the Kra Peninsula between the peninsula's beginning in Thailand to north of Thai-Malay border. The light cruiser *Kashii* escorted the seven transports; destroyer support was not required. These four towns on the west coast of the Kra Peninsula north of the Thai-Malay border supported movement of the Imperial Guards Division south, protected the flank and rear of the 25th Army during its operations into British Malaya and provided for the capture of various Thai airbases in southern Thailand and the airbase at Victoria Point in southern Burma. The airbases in southern Thailand would support future operations in British Malaya and Singapore. Capture of Victoria Point would sever



the aerial supply for British Malaya and Singapore. The remaining two landing sites in Thailand supported opening assault into British Malaya.

British Malaya (Surrendered: 15 February 1942--with Singapore)

The Pacific War came to the United Kingdom nearly ninety minutes--0015 on 8 December 1941--before the attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet when the commander of the 8th Indian Brigade, Brigadier General Berthold Key, ordered his forces to open fire upon the Japanese ships offloading troops at Kota Bharu. Heavy seas complicated the offloading of troops from Japanese ships and many soldiers drowned from the weight of their equipment when their boats capsized. A half-hour later, over two hundred men assaulted the intricate beach defense network. While the first troops fought through the minefields and barbed wire, the navy commander pressed General Hiroshi Takumi, commander of 56th Infantry Regiment of the 18th Infantry Division, to cease the attack when RAAF Hudsons attacked the anchored Japanese transports. General Takumi did not stop attacking knowing it was impossible to rescue forces already ashore. All three transports, *Awajisan Maru*, *Ayatosan Maru*, *Sakura Maru*, were hit; *Awajisan Maru*--General Takumi's command ship--and *Ayatosan Maru* sunk. General Takumi joined his troops ashore before his transport sank.

While the attacks along the northern portions of the Kra peninsula provided protection, facilitated movement and captured airbases, the attacks near the Thai-Malay border severed British Malaya from any land reinforcements from Burma and capture additional airbases for future operations into British Malaya and Singapore. The 9th Infantry Brigade in ten transports landed at Singora and the 42nd Infantry Regiment in six transports landed at Patani. Both regiments belonged to the 5th Infantry Division;

both sites were inside Thailand. Supporting the entire campaign was the Second Fleet of the Southern Force, comprised of two battleships, seven heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and fourteen destroyers. The complement of ships assigned to each invasion force changed throughout the campaign and there were no aircraft carriers supporting the attack on British Malaya.

The United Kingdom relied on a defense plan named Operation MATADOR for its defense of Malaya and Singapore. Unfortunately, execution of the plan hinged on Japanese operations in Thailand. Operation MATADOR required the placement of British troops within Thailand, much like French plans for troops within Belgium.<sup>11</sup> The Thai government would not allow troops within their borders. Thailand would support Japan if the United Kingdom invaded and support the United Kingdom if Japan invaded.<sup>12</sup> IJA planning defeated the British plans in the first hours of war by invading Thailand and attacking at the Thai-Malaya border.<sup>13</sup>

The Japanese secretly constructed an airfield on Phu Quoc Island off the coast of Indochina, placing an airfield within bombing range to the airbases supporting Singora, Patani and Kota Bharu. Twenty-seven Japanese bombers attacked Alor Star, southwest of Singora and Patani and west of Kota Bharu. Eighteen of the twenty-four Blenheim bombers of Number 62 squadron were destroyed. Five Japanese bombers attacked at Sungei Point, south of Alor Star, destroying seven airplanes. The attacks were coordinated for 0730 on 8 December. Three hours later, fifteen Japanese bombers destroyed an additional eighteen airplanes. The remaining four Buffalos and four Blenheims were sent south to Butterworth. At 0930, the Japanese attacked the airfield at Kota Bharu, destroying thirteen of the twenty-five aircraft.

Twelve hours after Japanese forces landed at Singora and Patani, the 11th Indian Division crossed into Thailand in attempt to stop the Japanese advance. Less than an hour later, British forces began withdrawing to Malaya. The only saving grace was delaying a significant portion of Japanese forces from moving off the beaches they captured earlier that day; by night, Japanese reinforcements arrived and began moving inland.

#### The Philippines (Surrendered: 6 May 1942)

All intelligence pointed towards a probable attack on the Philippines by Japan. Less than three hours after the attack on the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor began, Japanese bombs were dropped on a Philippine Army radio station at Aparri on the island of Luzon; the time was 0445 on 8 December 1941. Japanese air forces were scheduled to attack the air forces of the United States Armed Forces--Far East (USAFFE) at Clark Field near sunrise. Fog and weather delayed the launching of these aircraft. Rigid command and control structures under General Douglas MacArthur, commander of USAFFE, inhibited a timely launch of the planned B-17 attack on Japanese airfields on Formosa--modern day Taiwan. Major General Lewis Brereton, commander of the air forces of USAFFE, received tentative approval from MacArthur's chief of staff, Major General Richard Sutherland. Brereton awaited MacArthur's final approval before the aircraft could launch towards Formosa.<sup>14</sup>

While Brereton awaited approval from MacArthur, the Japanese conducted other missions on the Philippines. At 0615, IJN landing forces captured an unfinished airfield on Batan Island north of Luzon. Aircraft from the carrier *Ryujo*, operating on intelligence that a U.S. carrier was in Malang Bay in the southern Philippines, attacked the seaplane

tender USS *William B. Preston* and PBY aircraft of Patrol Wing Ten. Patrol Wing Ten suffered heavy loss in aircraft; however, the *Preston* escaped with minimal damage.

Shortly after eight o'clock, six hours after the attack at Pearl Harbor began, the Air Warning System (AWS) notified USAFFE of an inbound flight of Japanese aircraft. Major David Gibbs, group operations officer for the B-17s at Clark, ordered the launch of the aircraft to protect them from the impending attack. At 0850, Colonel Harold George ordered the launch of the 17th Pursuit Squadron at Nichols Field and 20th Pursuit Squadron at Clark Field to meet what was believed to be a Japanese attack on Clark Field. Unfortunately for the U.S. forces, the Japanese aircraft split. Sixteen twin-engine bombers attacked the airfield near the town of Tuguegaro in northern Luzon and eighteen attacked the summer capital at Baguio and the airfield at Cabanatuan. After flying for a few hours with no contact, the 17th and 20th Pursuit squadrons began landing at Clark Field around 1115. The last of the B-17s landed at 1130 to refuel and prepare for the now approved strike on Formosa. Unfortunately, the weather for the Japanese aircraft had improved. Despite one fatal crash in the middle of the launch, one hundred and seven bombers and forty-five Zeroes lifted from Tainan Field on Formosa. Just before the last of the B-17s landed, AWS detected the inbound Japanese aircraft. (Figure 8 displays the approximated routes taken by Japanese aircraft flying from Formosa.)

Pursuit aircraft launched to prepare for the impending Japanese attack at 1145. The 17th Pursuit Squadron patrolled over the Bataan Peninsula. The 3rd flew near Point Iba. The 21st covered between Cavite and Corregidor. This left the 20th and 34th--whose aircraft were antiquated and no match for the Zero--to protect Clark Field. Despite what appeared to be a formidable defence in the air, Japanese air forces devastated the

USAFPE aircraft at Clark Field. Twenty-seven bombers and thirty-six fighters were destroyed, twenty airplanes of the 20th Pursuit Squadron were destroyed, and eighteen of the twenty B-17s on the ground were destroyed.<sup>15</sup> Strategic airpower ceased to be an option for MacArthur.

#### Guam (Surrendered: 10 December 1941)

Guam, situated at the southern end of the Marianas Islands had been acquired by the United States after the Spanish-American War, was “large enough to take a major garrison and base” yet Congress did not vote monies for its defense. The governor, Captain G. J. McMillin, U.S. Navy, possessed only the *Penguin*, “a one-stack former Yangtze River minesweeper,” two patrol boats with a crew of five each, 271 sailors, 152 Marines and 246 men of the Guam Insular Guard to defend an island thirty miles long and seven miles wide and inhabited by 23,000 Guamanians. There were neither military airfield nor coastal defense guns; the largest weapon on island was a .30-caliber machinegun--the *Penguin* had a light-caliber antiaircraft gun onboard.<sup>16</sup> Understanding the situation and his lack of defenses, Captain McMillin ordered the military dependents off the island in November 1941; on 6 December 1941, he destroyed all of his code books.

Notification of the attack on the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor arrived at 0545 on 8 December 1941 (Guam time) from the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Asiatic Fleet, Admiral Thomas Hart, via Manila, Philippines. Following an assembly at the headquarters on Agana Placa, both U.S. forces and Guamanian militia began arresting ethnic Japanese. The commanding officer of the *Penguin*, LT J.W. Haviland, III, U.S. Navy, received a note regarding the attack at Pearl Harbor at 0800 on 8 December 1941

after returning to Apra Harbor following a 24-hour patrol around Guam; he immediately set General Quarters. Shortly afterwards at 0827 on 8 December 1941, Japanese aircraft from the 18th Air Group flying from Saipan in the Marianas strafed and bombed the *Penguin*, sinking her in the harbor. The airplanes continued on to glide-bomb the major town, Agana, the Pitt Naval Yard and the Marine barracks on the Orote Peninsula. Later that night, natives from Saipan sent ahead of the 5,000 Japanese invasion force were arrested. Intended to be interpreters for the Japanese, the men provided authorities with accurate plans regarding the Japanese invasion sites for Guam; unfortunately, they were not believed.

#### Wake (Surrendered: 23 December 1941)

Commander Winfield Scott Cunningham, U.S. Navy, and Major James P.S. Devereux, U.S. Marine Corps, received notification of the attack at Pearl Harbor by 0630 on 8 December. While the forces posted on the small atoll took their defensive positions, Major Paul A. Putnam, U.S. Marine Corps, sent up a patrol from the twelve Grumman F4F-3s--an obsolete aircraft at the time--of his command, VMF-211.<sup>17</sup> The squadron arrived at Wake on 4 December, transferred from Oahu by U.S.S. *Enterprise*.

Unfortunate for the atoll, the fighters flew north; they would not meet the approaching Japanese aircraft in the air. On the atoll, Commander Cunningham and Major Devereux had a total complement of “27 Marine Corps officers and 422 men (including the aviators), 10 naval officers and 58 enlisted men (including hospital corpsmen), a small Army communications unit of 1 officer and 4 men” in addition to the “70 Pan American Airways civilians and 1146 contractors’ employees.”<sup>18</sup> Unlike Guam, the Wake atoll

possessed coastal batteries of 3- and 5-inch, organized in three batteries on Peale, Wilkes and Peacock Points.

Thirty-six twin-engine bombers of the 24th Air Flotilla, organized in three twelve-plane formations, flew north from their bases on Roi and Namur islands from Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. Their approach was masked by a rain squall; the first reported sighting was by the Marines of Battery E at Peacock Point. At 1158 on 8 December, the Japanese bombing of the Wake Atoll defenses began from an altitude of two thousand feet. Seven planes of Major Putnam's VMF-211 were destroyed, either by bombs or fire. The communication center, tents and gasoline storage were destroyed, the latter two burning hot in the trade winds. One flight of aircraft devastated the Pan Am facilities, including its hotel, storage sheds, fuel tanks, radio shack and dock; the Pan Am *Philippine Clipper* suffered twenty-three bullet holes. In twelve minutes of bombing, the Japanese suffered no losses while the Americans lost twenty-three Marines and ten civilians. The defenders of Wake recalled watching the Japanese aircraft waggle their wings in triumph as they departed. The Pan Am *Philippine Clipper*, suffering so lightly in the attack, was stripped bare to accommodate as many passengers as possible. Mail and other non-essential weight was removed to make room for thirty-seven passengers and twenty-six Pan Am employees. The pilot required three attempts before getting the laden aircraft into the air; the plane still had a nearly twelve hundred mile flight to Midway. Of the stranded civilian workers, some offered to enlist while others fled into the bush. (Figure 9 provides a chart of Japanese attacks in the South-West Pacific and other island chains.)

Commander Cunningham and Major Devereux further strengthened the defenses of the small atoll to the best of their ability. Now having only four airplanes, they mined the airstrip to frustrate any airborne assault. A Navy lighter, filled with dynamite and concrete, blocked the main channel. Both officers understood that unless reinforced, Wake could not be held.

#### Singapore (Surrendered: 15 February 1942)

Rear Admiral Sadaichi Matsunga's 22nd Air Flotilla deployed two groups of twin-engine Nells bombers towards Singapore in the early morning hours of 8 December 1941; the Genzan and Mihoro air groups departed from the former French Indochina into bad weather enroute Singapore. Heavy winds and rains forced the flights to drop altitude until near the crests of the ocean's waves. The Genzan group returned to base while the Mihoro group "found better weather and regained altitude."<sup>19</sup> Royal Air Force radar stations recorded tracking over twelve aircraft by 0320 on 8 December 1941. By 0400, the Australian 453 Squadron at Sembawang Aerodome awoke to the air-raid siren. The pilots scrambled, but before any airplanes could fly, Air Command, in fear of fratricide by inexperienced gunners, cancelled the order. Pilots watched as searchlights found the Japanese bombers in the sky. Bombs dropped on Chinatown and at Seletar Air Base, where like Hickam in Honolulu was expecting a friendly aircraft about the time of the attack. In this case, the RAF was expecting a Dutch squadron. An unfortunate irony aided the Japanese; "because the official could not be located in time to switch off the street lights," the Japanese were guided to the city. Anti-aircraft fire came from both the Changi naval base and H.M.S. *Prince of Wales* and H.M.S. *Repulse*. The Japanese bombs landed in Chinatown; sixty-one people lost their lives in the attack.



### Hong Kong (Surrendered: 25 December 1941)

A United States Military Academy history records: “Japanese control of Canton, Hainan Island, French Indo-China, and Formosa virtually sealed the fate of Hong Kong well before the firing of the first shot.”<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately for the United Kingdom, Japan would not leave the British colony alone. In the early morning hours of 8 December 1941 (Hong Kong time), six infantry battalions of the 38th Division of the Twenty-Third (South China) Army attacked south; preceding the land attack was a bombing campaign that destroyed British air defenses. Starting at 1400 on 8 December 1941, thirty-five dive-bombers, split into two groups, attacked at Kowloon, destroying the three British torpedo bombers and two Walrus amphibians, and the harbor and civil field, destroying seven civil planes including the Pan American Hong Kong Clipper. Garrison commander, Major General C.M. Maltby, led “six battalions of Indian and Canadian infantry and twenty-eight field guns of the Singapore and Hong Kong Artillery” and “an ancient destroyer and eight motor torpedo boats” under orders to “hold out for ‘as long as possible’” and planned “to fight a delaying action of ‘a week to ten days’ . . . [at the] mainland defenses above Kowloon known as the Gedrinker’s Line.” The IJN’s participation in the capture of Hong Kong was minimal. The Second China Expeditionary Fleet light cruiser Isuzu and destroyers Ikazuchi and Inazuma supported the IJA during the initial phase by sinking the gunboats HMS Cicada and HMS Robin and a junks of British registry and captured merchant ships in harbor.

### Midway (Re-attacked on 3-4 June 1942 during the Battle of Midway)

Receipt of the 27 November 1941 “war warning” message caused Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, to use his carriers to

reinforce critical islands. Vice Admiral William F. “Bull” Halsey departed Pearl Harbor with U.S.S. *Enterprise* and escorts on 28 November 1941 to reinforce Wake Island.<sup>21</sup> Rear Admiral John H. Newton sailed with U.S.S. *Lexington* and escorts to reinforce Midway Island on 5 December 1941.<sup>22</sup>

Following the *Kido Butai*’s attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, IJN destroyers *Ushio* and *Sazanami* proceeded towards Midway Island for their task of shelling the U.S. defenses, including an airfield and oil facilities, of the island. After notification of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, defenses on Midway were manned. The two Japanese destroyers approached from the south and began firing at 2131 on 7 December 1941 at close range (it was 0031 on 8 December 1941 in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii). *Ushio* fired 108 rounds from her main batteries and *Sazanami* fired 193 from her main batteries. The destroyers’ shelling struck a plane hangar, setting it afire and killing one Marine officer. Island defenses illuminated the two destroyers and island coastal batteries returned fire, some claiming hits. After thirty minutes of shelling--and what the IJN recorded as 54 minutes of action--the two destroyers departed. Japanese records recorded additional hits on oil tanks. The raid was considered nothing more than a nuisance and no landing troops were deployed.

### Shanghai

While the sailors and Marines on the Wake Atoll would fight valiantly against the Japanese following the opening air attacks, the U.S. gunboat *Wake* would not live up to its namesake’s reputation; forty minutes after the attack at Pearl Harbor, the American colors over *Wake* were struck--the only U.S. warship to strike its colors during the Pacific War. The commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Columbus Smith, had ordered

most of his fourteen man crew ashore to a hotel with scuttle charges set onboard the former Yangtze River Patrol gunboat. By the time Commander Smith made it his command it had already been named *Tatara* by the IJN.

### Northern China

Two hundred and twelve Marines and U.S. Navy medical personnel remained in northern China after the initial withdrawal of maritime forces from China as ordered by Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet, Admiral Hart. These “included 141 U.S. Embassy Guards in Peking, 49 in Tientsin, and 22 at Chinwangtao.”<sup>23</sup> Awaiting withdrawal from the port of Chinwangtao by the SS *President Harrison*, the Marines anticipated departing northern China by 10 December 1941. Seven and a half hours after the attack on the Pacific Fleet, Major Omura of the IJA negotiated with the commanding officer of the Marine contingent in Tientsin, Major Luther Brown, U.S.M.C., who sought protection under the Boxer Protocol of 1901. Brown consulted with his superior, Colonel William Ashurst, who commanded all Marines in northern China. After Ashurst recommended complying with the IJA demands, Brown met with Omura at 1300 on 8 December 1941 and surrendered the Marines and naval forces of northern China, observing “this is the first time a United States Marine command has surrendered without a fight.”<sup>24</sup>

The Empire of Japan began an audacious military campaign on 7/8 December 1941. In an era where long-range communications consisted of little more than Morse code HF transmissions, sea and aerial navigation were conducted by dead reckoning and celestial fixes, and aviation ordnance was not guided, the IJA and IJN conducted synchronized operations across nearly one third of the globe. Historian Dennis Young wrote *First 24 Hours of the Pacific War*, naming each chapter after a line within

President Roosevelt's speech.<sup>25</sup> Historian Stanley Weintraub's *Long Day's Journey Into War: December 7, 1941* spans the slip into world war, discussing both the Pacific and European battlefields.<sup>26</sup> Far more happened in those first twenty-four hours than the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, much of it predicted by U.S. intelligence. Not only were the future Allied powers surprised by the Japanese operations, but the Japanese were surprised by the sweeping successes against the British and the United States. The overwhelming success of this aggressive campaign would have great repercussions on the future of the war.

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<sup>1</sup>President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, *Address to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War with Japan*, 8 December 1941, Available from <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/oddec7.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>H. P. Willmott, *Empires in the Balance: Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies to April 1942* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 175.

<sup>4</sup>Haruo Tohmatsu and H. P. Willmott, *A Gathering Darkness: The Coming of War to the Far East and the Pacific, 1921-1942* (Lanham, MD: SR Books, 2004), 106.

<sup>5</sup>Willmott, *Empires in the Balance*, 133.

<sup>6</sup>Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton, U.S.N. (Ret.) with Captain Roger Pineau, U.S.N.R. (Ret.) and John Costello, *"And I Was There": Pearl Harbor and Midway--Breaking the Secrets* (New York, NY: Quill, 1985), 311.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. Layton records the famous "TO RA, TO RA, TO RA" signal being Morse tapped out over radio while Gordon Prange states Fuchida made a voice report of "Tora! Tora! Tora!" (Gordon W. Prange with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1981), 504).

<sup>8</sup>Battleships: *Arizona, Oklahoma, California, Nevada, West Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Utah*. Light cruisers: *Raleigh, Helena, Honolulu*. Destroyers: *Cassin, Downes, Shaw*. Repair ship *Vestal*. Seaplane tender *Curtiss*. Minelayer *Oglala*. From: Paul S. Dull, *A Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy (1941-1945)* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1978), 17.

<sup>9</sup>Willmott, *Empires in the Balance*, 134.

<sup>10</sup>In the 2001 edition of his book *Pearl Harbor*, H. P. Willmott explains in detail why Nagumo did not order a third strike and refutes claims by Fuchida of demands for a third strike following the recovery of all aircraft. The title of the chapter is “The Follow-Up Strike Controversy.” H. P. Willmott with Tohmatsu Haruo and W. Spencer Johnson, *Pearl Harbor* (London, UK: Cassell & Co., 2001), 142-157.

<sup>11</sup>John Keegan, *The Second World War* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1989), 61.

<sup>12</sup>Donald J. Young, *First 24 Hours of War in the Pacific* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>13</sup>Young, 17. The restrictions by the British government were not the only hindrance on an effective defense of Malaya. Though he asked on 4 December to violate Thai neutrality by establishing positions near Singora and Patani, Air Chief Marshall Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, the British Far East commander, held orders for the 11th Indian Division, tasked under Operation MATATDOR, to move into Thailand to block the IJA after London cabled approval of his 4 December request to do so. Approval was received at 0800, nearly eight hours after the attack started at Kota Bharu.

<sup>14</sup>Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War With Japan* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1985), 107-108.

<sup>15</sup>Young, 92.

<sup>16</sup>There was an advance party of workmen on Guam to begin building an airfield on the Orote Peninsula by 8 December 1941; four decades of no money was corrected by last-minute juggling by President Roosevelt. Unfortunately, it was too late. Stanley Weintraub, *Long Day's Journey: December 7, 1941* (New York, NY: Truman Talley Books, 1991), 373.

<sup>17</sup>Sources disagree on the total number of aircraft Major Putnam initially sent on patrol. In *The War in the Pacific*, Donald Young lists an “eight-plane patrol” while Stanley Weintraub lists a four-plane patrol in *Long Days' Journey*.

<sup>18</sup>Samuel Eliot Morison. *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, vol. 3, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April 1942* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1948), 229.

<sup>19</sup>Weintraub, 331.

<sup>20</sup>Department of Military Art and Engineering, *The War With Japan: December 1941 to August 1942*, part 1 of 3 (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, 1950), 31.

<sup>21</sup>Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*, 420.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 460.

<sup>23</sup>Young, 130.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>25</sup>Donald J. Young, *First 24 Hours of War in the Pacific* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1998).

<sup>26</sup>Stanley Weintraub, *Long Day's Journey Into War: December 7, 1941* (New York, NY: Truman Talley Books, 1991).

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The Japanese crippling of the Pacific Fleet, the elimination of the threat presented on the flank, left the Japanese free to overrun south-east Asia, and between December 1941 and April 1942 the various enemies of Japan were individually and collectively routed. In reality, the fact that Japanese landings on the Kra Isthmus were staged some minutes ahead of the attack on the Pacific Fleet points to the fact that the staging of the assaults on British, Dutch and American possessions in south-east was not directly dependent upon events at Pearl Harbor.<sup>1</sup>

H. P. Willmott, *Pearl Harbor*

The Pacific War for the United States began when the air forces and submarines of Imperial Japan caught the U.S. Pacific Fleet unawares in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Sunday morning, 7 December 1941. President Franklin D. Roosevelt identified the day as one “which will live in infamy.” Many in the country, from government officials to ordinary citizens, questioned how the Japanese could surprise the U.S. Navy in Hawaii. There were nine investigations into the attack at Pearl Harbor, culminating with the Joint Congressional Committee that met after the Empire of Japan surrendered. Much of the investigations focused on intelligence and warnings sent to Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Pearl Harbor remains today synonymous with “intelligence failure.” Multiple histories and historical case studies on “intelligence failure” use the attack at Pearl Harbor, continuing a stereotype that U.S. intelligence before 7 December 1941 was faulty.

When one listens to or reads the entire speech delivered by President Roosevelt, one discovers a list of other attacks conducted by the Japanese that day. Stanley Weintraub titled his history of ‘7 December 1941’--he covers that day, 7 December 1941

from the perspective of Hawaii, throughout the entire worldwide conflict--*Long Day's Journey Into War*. Much more happened in those first twenty-four hours of the Pacific War than the attack at Pearl Harbor. Japanese forces were assaulting Kota Bharu off Malaya on the Kra Peninsula about the same time as the U.S.S. *Ward* attacked and sank a Japanese miniature submarine trying to enter Pearl Harbor. Both were nearly ninety minutes before the first bomb dropped at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor. Compare President Roosevelt's speech with the Navy Department's messages of 24 and 27 November 1941 and Kimmel's defensive actions in late November and early December 1941 and a different view of the efficiency of U.S. intelligence emerges. An examination of the U.S. intelligence community as it existed in 1941, the collection methods available, the Japanese military high command and Japanese war plans reveals U.S. intelligence, despite failing to predict the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, provided remarkably accurate and detailed reporting on Japan prior to the onset of the Pacific War.

One significant similarity between the U.S. intelligence community and the Japanese high command that greatly influenced U.S. intelligence efficiency was the fractured structures both nations maintained. Each suffered with problems of split or overlapping authority and responsibility. A dysfunctional collection of different service intelligence communities collecting on a fractured high command of a reserved, xenophobic society begins its work a great disadvantage.

The U.S. intelligence community incorporated multiple governmental agencies without any true coordination in analysis and collection. The War Department had the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Division (MID) whose mission focused its attention on the capabilities and intentions of the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA). The Navy



Department possessed the oldest service intelligence agency, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), focused on the capabilities of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN). While some intelligence was shared, the predominant method of business was to ‘stovepipe’ intelligence from the respective agency, through its service chief to its secretary and the president. Even cooperation of decoding messages via Operation MAGIC--the successful breaking of the Japanese diplomatic code known as Purple--did not increase intelligence information sharing between the services.

Other organizations inside the U.S. government interfered with effective coordination. J. Edgar Hoover and the Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted domestic intelligence, duplicating efforts of ONI at times. William “Wild Bill” Donovan headed President Roosevelt’s attempt at a coordinated effort on strategic intelligence, the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI). Unfortunately, both the Army and Navy saw this as a threat and countered with the recommendation of a Joint Intelligence Board. None of these organizations freely shared information with each other or even with the COI, despite the President’s order to the contrary.

The Empire of Japan possessed no better system for the control of its military forces than the United States possessed for controlling intelligence. The Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) did not possess control over the services. The IJA and IJN provided the Emperor with independent operations plans for the year, each taking a different direction for the expansion of the empire. These competing plans synched with attempts to garner more resources for building their respective forces. The IJN sought a southern expansion policy in the South-West Pacific and the IJA sought a continental expansion policy, including heading north into the Soviet Union. Up until 1940, both

services competed against each other until events in Europe, problems in China and the defeat of IJA forces near Nomonhan in 1939 caused the IJA to alter its plans.

The IJN was not as monolithic an organization as the U.S. Navy Department. The IJN would learn how fractured its system was when Admiral Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet, raised the issue of an attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor while plans for the conquest of the Southern Resources Area--the islands of the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), British Borneo and other lesser islands were being formulated. Debate over the feasibility of the Pearl Harbor raid continued long after the Pacific War was over.

Roberta Wohlstetter proposed in her book *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* the concept of “signal-to-noise” ratio. Intelligence analysts might fail to “connect the dots” or predicted the enemy’s course of action because they are unable to sift through the plethora of information available for the key facts.<sup>2</sup> Attempting to analyze a dysfunctional high command of a closed and xenophobic nation provided a momentous amount of noise.

The period of time between the First and Second World Wars is commonly referred to in the United States as the interwar period. This time saw great changes in tactics--the use of the aircraft in a broader role, armor and parachute infantry to name a few--and doctrine. Having fought the “war to end all wars” and suffering the Great Depression, the U.S. government, including its armed forces, downsized and budgets became tight. Service culture sought areas to make the strongest cuts and one of the first to suffer were intelligence. As war, either in Europe or the Pacific, loomed on the

horizon, critical efforts were made to reestablish intelligence organizations capable of handling the threats of German and Japanese expansionism.

Crowning achievements in intelligence during the interwar period were the feats within the field of cryptology and cryptanalysis, subcategories of Communications Intelligence (COMINT). Herbert Yardley and the Black Chamber assisted in the successful negotiations of the Washington Treaty by reading diplomatic traffic between the Japanese contingent and Tokyo. Though the multiple World War I organizations were collapsed into one or disbanded after the war, much of the technical and intellectual capability remained. ONI conducted covert seizures of codes and William Friedman eventually cracked the Japanese diplomatic code called Purple. As the United States and Japan negotiated to prevent all-out war in the Pacific--with the embargoes and rhetoric, a cold war between the two nations existed--U.S. intelligence read diplomatic message traffic not only to the Japanese embassy in the United States, but to embassies in Europe. These efforts provided a great deal of information regarding diplomatic decisions towards war.

Purple was cracked at the expense of operational codes, specifically the JN-25b code the IJN used. Operational message traffic for the IJN was recorded and used to develop a procedure for cracking it. The efforts of Commander Joseph J. Rochefort in Honolulu, Hawaii, at Station HYPO--the Hawaii center in the U.S. Navy's COMINT system--would serve well during those first months of the Pacific War, but did not work prior to 7 December 1941. The Navy used traffic analysis to gather information about the transmitter and recipients of messages it could not decode and translate. Direction finding, key recognition--identifying specific operators by their manners when keying--

and call signs helped provide critical information regarding the movement of ships, the issuing of orders, etcetera.

The U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Joseph Grew, provided a great deal of information regarding the atmosphere in Japan. Brigadier General Sherman Miles, the U.S. Army's G-2, highlighted his reports. Attaches provided critical information on Japanese capabilities while relations were moderate. As Japan enacted laws greatly restricting the interaction Japanese citizens could have with Americans and secluded attaches from bases and training areas, the quality and quantity of information severely dropped. In testimonial to the vigorous efforts of the ambassador and his attaches, much critical information continued to be sent.

Another source suffered greatly with the decline of relations between Japan and the United States: reports from U.S. merchant mariners. An island nation, Japan subsisted heavily on imported goods, including a significant portion of its oil and steel from the United States. As merchant ships traveled through Japanese waters and entered or departed port to deliver goods, their officers, many of them reservists within the U.S. Navy, recorded observations on exercises of the IJN they observed. When the full embargo took affect, these reports ceased since U.S. merchant shipping no longer visited Japanese ports. At-sea tests of technological innovations of Japanese forces were probably missed by the loss of this source.

Diplomatic policy towards Japan prevented aerial reconnaissance of either Japanese waters or the waters around Japanese mandated islands. Only in the last days before war was a reconnaissance missions ordered to fly over Japanese islands in the Western Pacific. These missions were overcome by events when Japan initiated

hostilities over the breadth of the Pacific from Hawaii to the Kra Peninsula. Other U.S. and British reconnaissance missions collected positions of Japanese fleet moving southwards. Without flights into Japanese waters or mandated islands, the carrier forces were not located; however, traffic analysis and comparison to previous operations indicated they were possibly underway in support of protecting Japan during the southward expansion.

The IJA and IJN submitted annual operations plans to the emperor for approval. As discussed before, the IJA sought expansion on the continent through China and the Soviet Union. The IJN sought expansion through South-East Asia and the South-West Pacific. With expansion in China beginning to become a quagmire and expansion northwards difficult after the sound defeat of IJA forces at Nomonhan, the IJA altered its operations plan to include southward expansion as part of its pacification of China. Incorporated in the IJA plan were multiple surprise attacks on the colonies of European powers now either embroiled in a war with or having already capitulated to Nazi Germany. As a matter of pride, the IJN could not withdraw its support of southward expansion.

In addition to the difficulties with northward expansion by the IJA, American efforts to impact the ability of the Japanese military forces in China influenced the decision both for moving south and declaring war. After Japan, with the aid of triumphant Germany, obtained occupation rights in northern French Indo-China, President Roosevelt began an economic policy of restricting resources critical to Japanese war efforts. The first restriction was in the summer of 1940, which included aviation fuel and steel. Through diplomacy, the United States ensured European powers in the South-West

Pacific did not compensate or even cooperated with the economic sanctions. Studies in Japan, especially by the IJN, depicted depleted stocks of oil within eighteen months. In preparation for further expansion into South-East Asia, Japan occupied the southern portion of French Indo-China. The allied response was full economic sanctions and the freezing of assets in respective countries. This facilitated Japan's decision for war.

Japanese strategic goal was the Southern Resources Area; the manner of how to achieve that conquest was debated. Traditionally--especially in the IJN--Japan fought one enemy. Expansion south would add to the continuing conflict with China the United States, Britain and the Netherlands. Four methods of conquest were developed. The first two met the tradition of one enemy at a time, only differentiating the order of defeat (Malaya, the NEI and the Philippines or the Philippines, the NEI and Malaya). These were discounted because the last target at the end of either chain would be reinforced by the time Japanese forces arrived. The third sought the surprise capture of the NEI followed by the capture of Malaya and the Philippines. This left lines of communication vulnerable to American and British attacks and was discounted. The last method was the riskiest and most significantly different to previous Japanese behavior: attack Malaya and the Philippines simultaneously and progress southward to isolate and capture the NEI. This is the plan adopted by the Japanese.

Japanese strategy centered on three principles: (1) the defeat of European and American forces in South-East Asia and South-West Pacific and conquest of the Southern Resources Area, (2) the establishment of a defensive perimeter, hardened to withstand assault, and (3) protection of the Empire of Japan by defeating any incursion into what Japan identified as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Under the first principle,

the first phase of operations incorporated multiple near-simultaneous operations in the first twenty-four hours. Japanese forces would force Thailand to capitulate by invading towards Bangkok. Japanese forces would also land at seven beaches along the Kra Peninsula to secure movement of troops southward towards Malaya. Malaya would be invaded. American air power in the Philippines would be destroyed in preparation for follow-on amphibious assaults. Various islands would be bombed in preparation for capture or shelled to harass American defenders.

Admiral Yamamoto, having studied and toured in the United States, did not believe capture of a defensive perimeter and awaiting the decisive engagement between the U.S. Pacific Fleet and the Combined Fleet was a viable strategy for Japanese survival. He secretly proposed the possibility of an attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Hawaiian waters to clear the flank of the southern attack. Coupled with the establishment of a defensive perimeter and U.S. involvement in the European conflict, such a defeat might prompt the United States to cede Japan newly conquered territories in the South-West Pacific in a negotiated settlement. His daring plan was not well received by the Navy minister, senior officers or peers. By October 1941, he convinced the Navy General Staff to approve his plan. Yet in November 1941, he threatened resignation when his demands for all six of the fleet carriers threatened its cancellation. Few in the IGHQ were briefed about the attack. Prime Minister Tojo, who also happened to be the Army Minister, was not briefed before the attack.

The U.S. intelligence community provided exceptional warning against the Japanese plans despite a lack of collection assets, a myriad of conflicting reports and a dysfunctional establishment. By late November 1941, the government of the United

States anticipated war with Japan as both unavoidable and imminent. On 24 November 1941, Admiral Harold R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, sent to Admiral Kimmel a message warning of Japanese movement in any direction with specific threats to the Philippines and Guam. Three days later, Admiral Stark sent a 'war warning', identifying the Philippines, the Thai or Kra Peninsula and possibly Borneo as targets. Intelligence from his own staff and his understanding of the old War Plan ORANGE and RAINBOW V forced Kimmel to reinforce Wake and Midway Islands in anticipation of hostilities. When Admiral William "Bull" Halsey left with his U.S.S. *Enterprise* battle group, he left under the impression war had begun and issued orders to shoot on sight.

The U.S. intelligence community, in discounting an attack on Pearl Harbor, relied on an assessment of Japanese technical capabilities that concluded the Japanese had no ships that could reach Oahu, Hawaii, and back without refueling, no torpedoes that could operate in the shallow water of Pearl Harbor and did not have the bombing proficiency to conduct such an attack. Oddly, Commander Minoru Genda derived the same opinions when asked to assess the Pearl Harbor Operation for Admiral Yamamoto. Admiral Yamamoto ensured technological problems were overcome and training corrected any deficiencies. Another technological issue, the ability to have fighter cover for Japanese bombers flying from Formosa to the Philippines and back, nearly derailed the Pearl Harbor Operation, but successful tests in November 1941 permitted the detachment of the six carriers on the raid.

The date for the attacks was related to the calendar in Tokyo. The day chosen was 8 December 1941. Near midnight, Japanese forces exchanged fire with Indian forces under British command on the island of Kota Bharu nearly ninety minutes before the first



bombs were dropped at Pearl Harbor. During the Pearl Harbor attack and afterwards, Japan surprised British and American forces with devastating attacks, including the forced capitulation of Thailand, attacks on Hong Kong, assaults on the Thai and Malaya portions of the Kra Peninsula, air attacks on the Philippines, Guam, and Wake, and the shelling of Midway. Much of what U.S. intelligence predicted for Japan's opening campaign came to be.

Emily S. Rosenberg, a professor at Duke University, wrote a cultural history of the attack at Pearl Harbor.<sup>3</sup> She discusses the impact the early morning raid has had on American culture over the last sixty years. Since the attack of 11 September 2001 occurred while she was writing the book, she observed the influence the Pearl Harbor raid had in the United States' response to the unpredicted terrorist attacks. In his book *Bush at War*, Bob Woodward describes how Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld gave copies of Roberta Wohlstetter's book *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. government drew many lessons from the failure of U.S. intelligence to warn about the raid at Pearl Harbor, including the formation of the Central Intelligence Agency. Following 11 September, there were calls for an investigation along the lines of those into the attack at Pearl Harbor.

Unfortunately, many continue to fail to understand the significance of the Pearl Harbor raid in the context of the overall Japanese strategy or war plans. Concepts as complex as national pride and simple as the location of the attack relative to the international dateline elevated the significance of the Pearl Harbor raid in history. Historian H.P. Willmott wrote, "Most Western accounts of the campaign in Southeast Asia follow its course from a strictly national viewpoint, with the emphasis that is placed

on one theater or aspect of the campaign being to the detriment of an overall view of the struggle.”<sup>5</sup> The attack at Pearl Harbor continues to be debated by historians in books and articles. The United States continues to commemorate the date through official days to modern Hollywood movies. Yet, there is no discussion of the strategic breadth and magnitude of the Japanese *attacks* that day. The United States only remembers Pearl Harbor.

Caleb Carr wrote, “Americans don’t like to believe that our fate is ever out of our own hands or that anyone else in the world can beat our best efforts. When we fail, it must be the fault of our own incompetence.”<sup>6</sup> When discussing the opening of the Pacific War, this holds only partially true. The United States was surprised on 7 December 1941 by the location of the attack; however, the government knew war was coming shortly and knew of the ultimate aims of the Japanese war plans prior to the shooting. U.S. intelligence provided early warning to critical stations that war loomed on the horizon and identified places that were attacked that same day, if not before the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. Given its own dysfunctional organization, severely limited collection capability, and the target of its efforts, U.S. intelligence did a remarkable job at accurately predicting the impending Japanese campaign and provided military commanders and political leaders with timely warning.

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<sup>1</sup>H. P. Willmott, *Pearl Harbor* (London, UK: Cassell and Co., 2001), 158.

<sup>2</sup>Malcolm Gladwell dissected the fallacy of comparing postmortem “connecting the dots” with pre-event interpretation in the post-11 September political environment. His article “Connecting the Dots” was published in the 10 March 2003 issue of *The New Yorker* and is available at: [http://www.gladwell.com/2003/2003\\_03\\_10\\_a\\_dots.html](http://www.gladwell.com/2003/2003_03_10_a_dots.html)

<sup>3</sup>Emily S. Rosenberg, *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 248 pp..

<sup>4</sup>Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 22-23.

<sup>5</sup>H. P. Willmott, *Empires in the Balance: Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies to April 1942* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 175.

<sup>6</sup>Caleb Carr, “Stop Blaming, Wise Up to Postwar Realities,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 25 June 2003, B15.

ILLUSTRATIONS

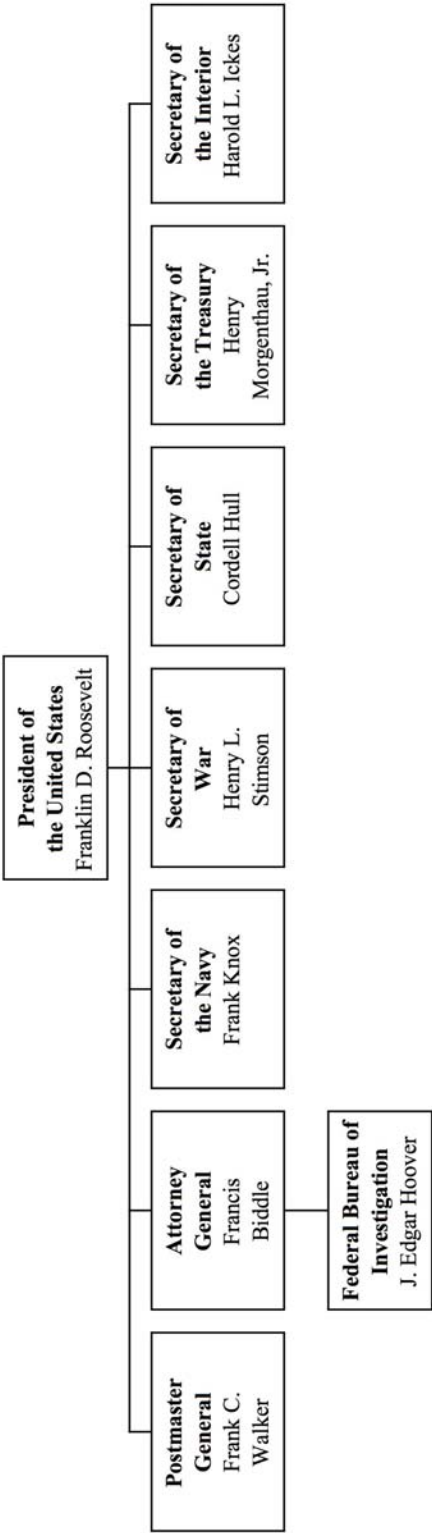


Figure 1. Simplified Chart of Executive Branch as of 7 December 1941  
Source: Gordon W. Prange with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1986), xxix.

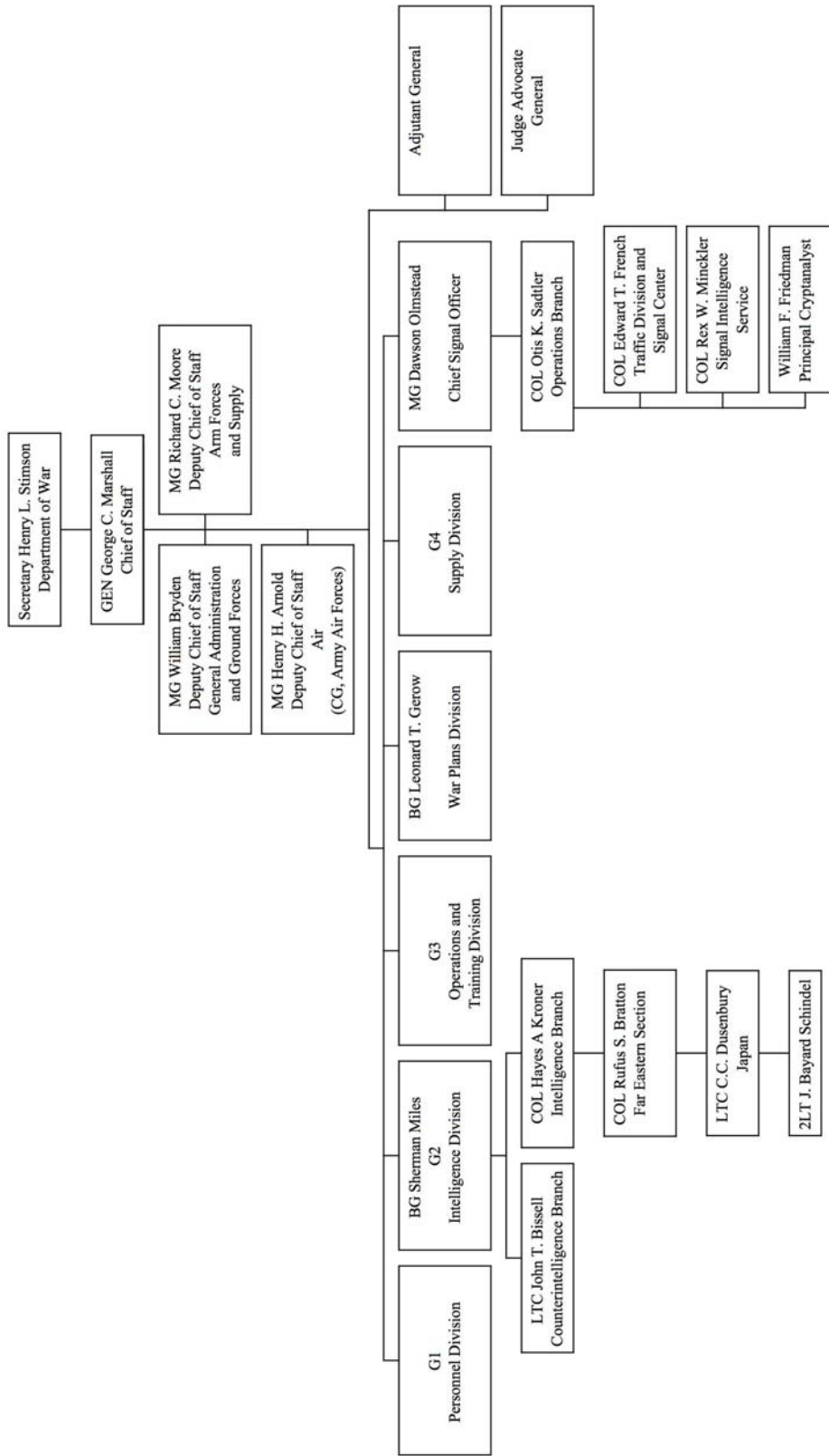


Figure 2. Simplified Chart of War Department as of 7 December 1941

Source: Gordon W. Prange with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1981), 85.

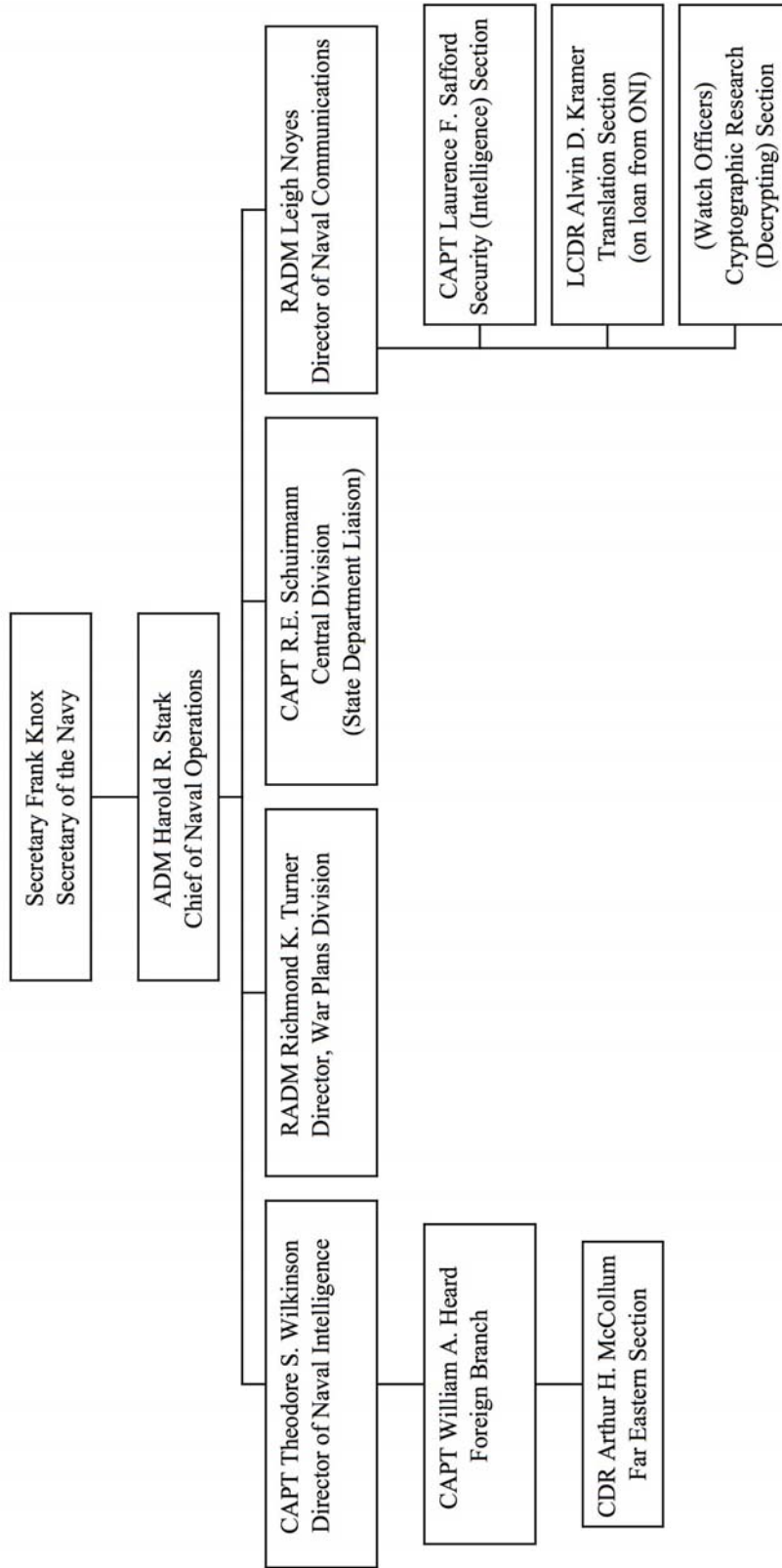


Figure 3. Simplified Chart of Navy Department as of 7 December 1941  
 Source: Gordon W. Prange with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1981), 83.

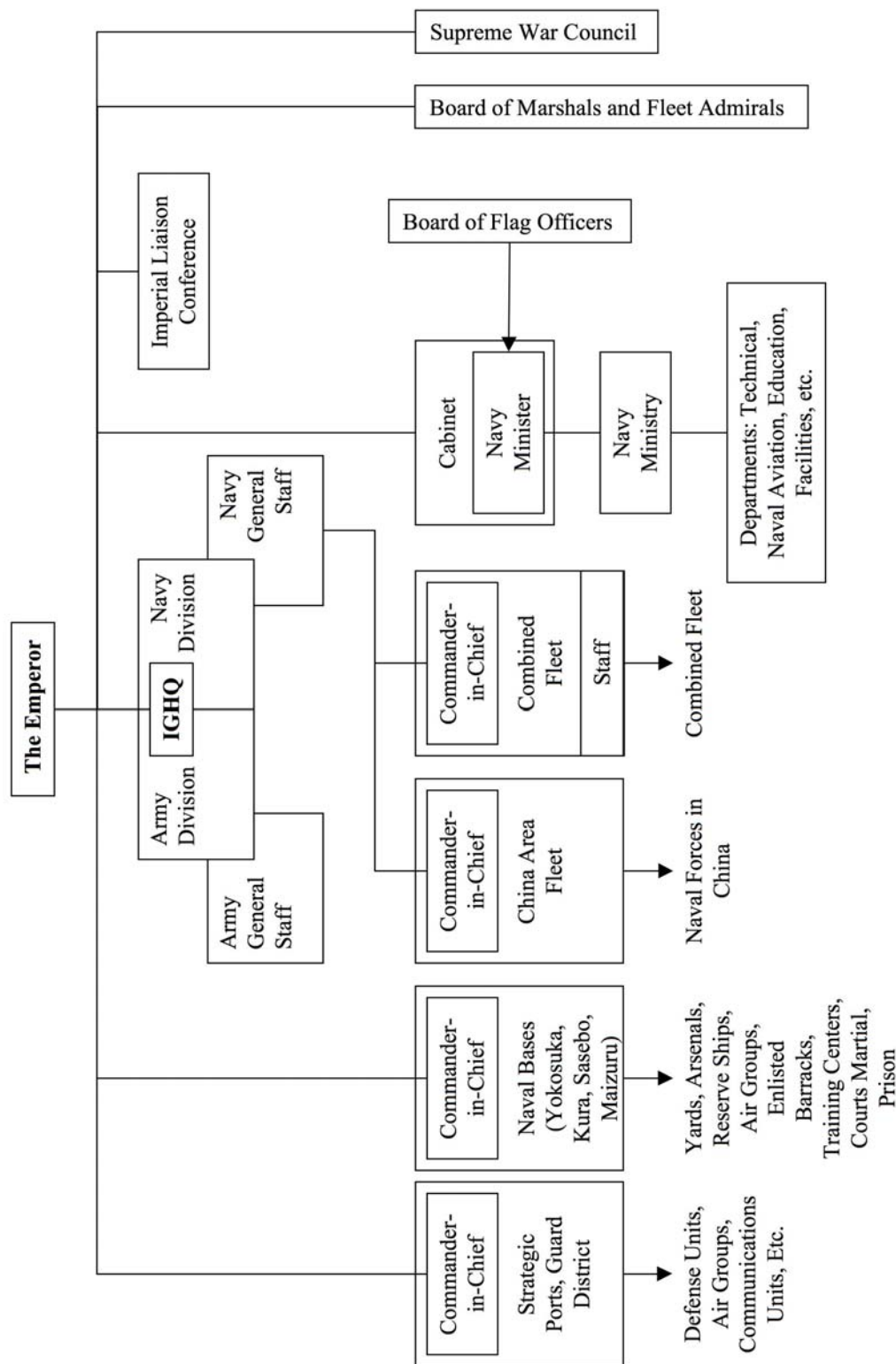


Figure 4. The Imperial Japanese Navy High Command Organization

Source: David C. Evans and Mark R. Beattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 459.

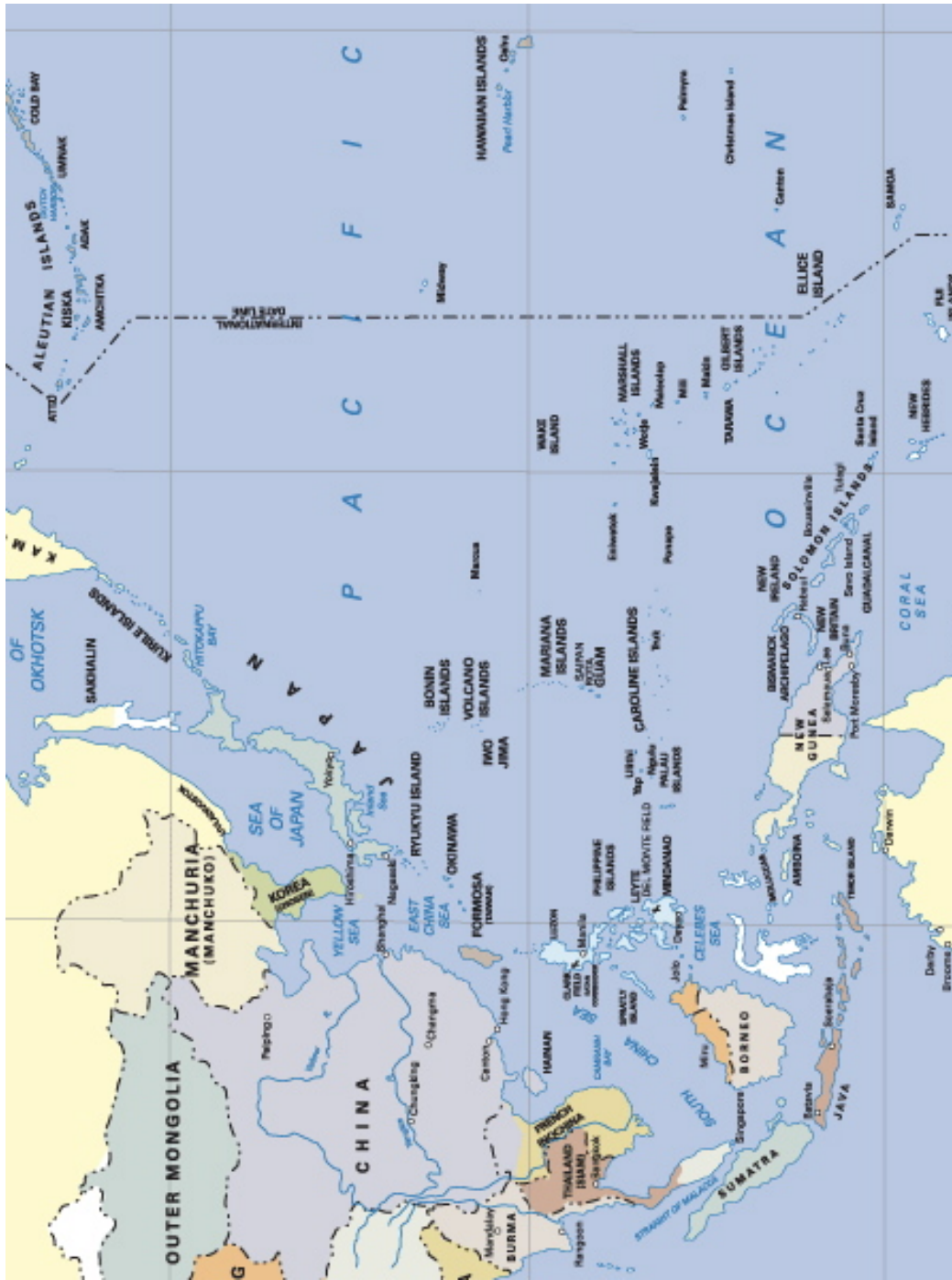


Figure 5. The West Pacific and East Asia in 1941

Source: History Department, United States Military Academy, "The Far East and the Pacific, 1941" in *World War Two: Asia-Pacific Atlas*. [http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlas/ww2\\_pacific/ww2\\_pacific/ww2\\_pacific/ww2\\_pacific/WWII-Asia-01.gif](http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlas/ww2_pacific/ww2_pacific/ww2_pacific/ww2_pacific/WWII-Asia-01.gif)



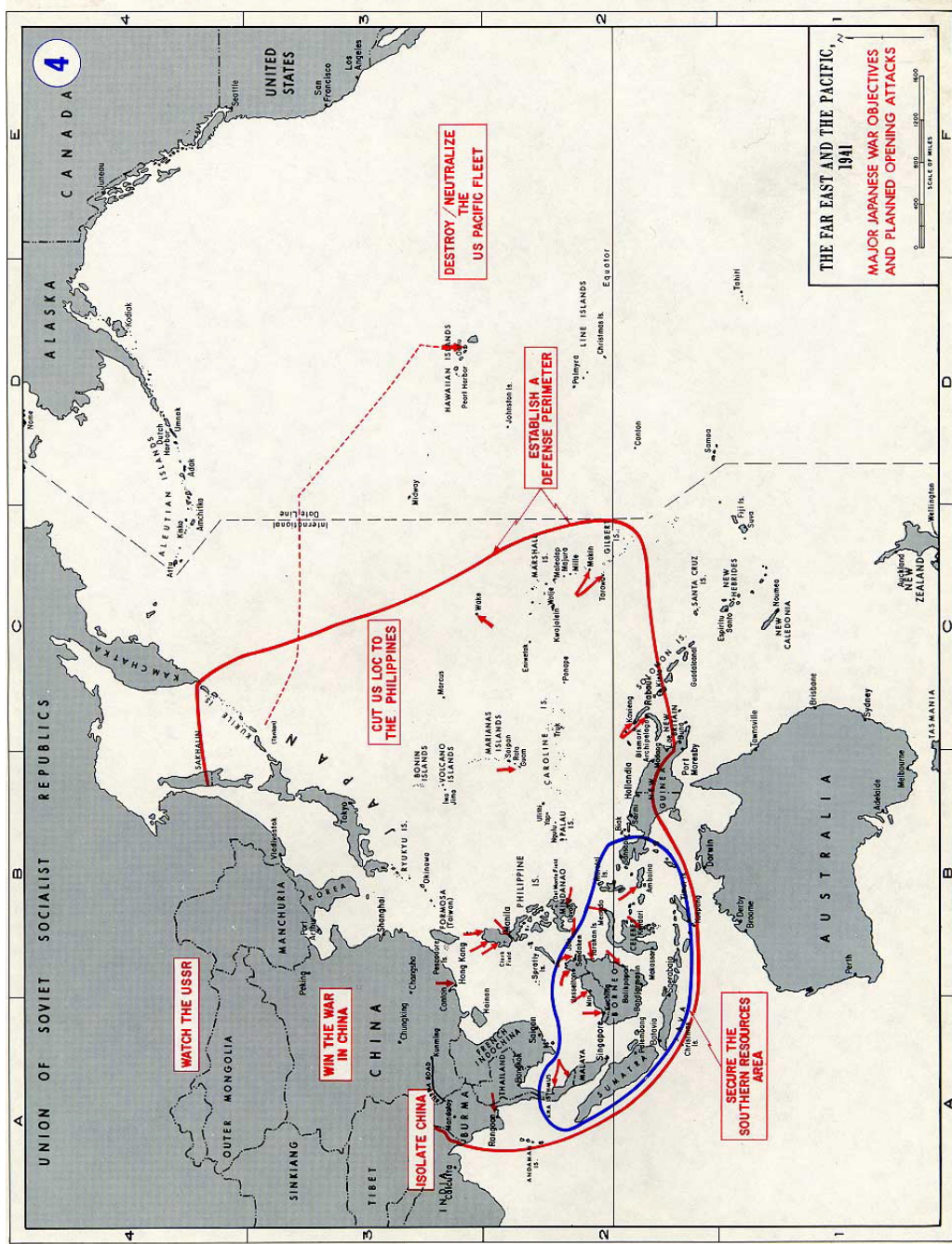


Figure 6. Major Japanese War Objectives and Planned Opening Attacks

Source: History Department, United States Military Academy, "Plans and Forces at the Beginning of the War, 1941" in *World War Two: Asia-Pacific Atlas*. [http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlas/ww2\\_pacific/ww2\\_pacific\\_maps/ww2\\_asia\\_map\\_04.gif](http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlas/ww2_pacific/ww2_pacific_maps/ww2_asia_map_04.gif)







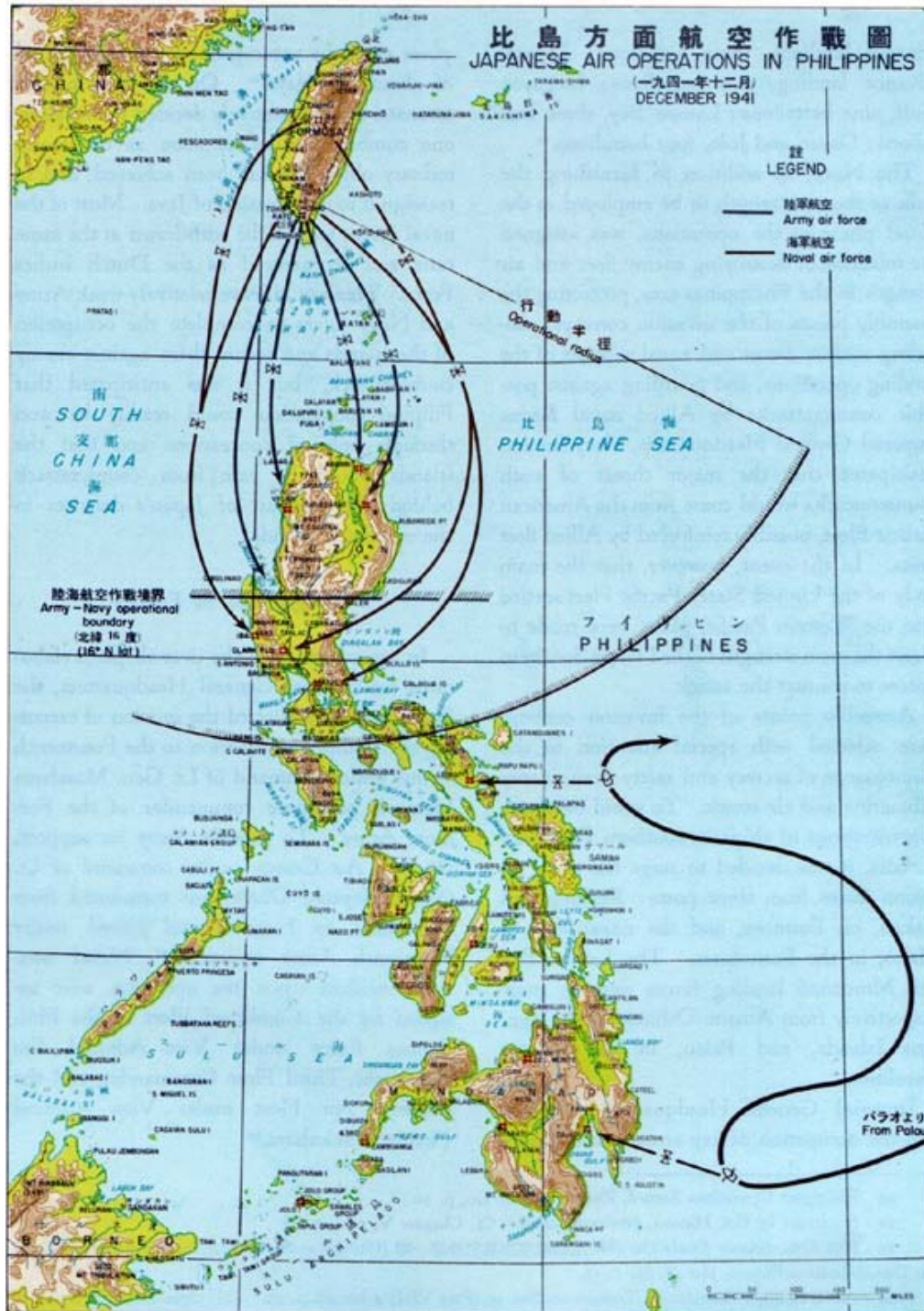


Figure 8. Japanese Air Operations in the Philippines

Source: Center of Military History, United States Army, *Reports of General MacArthur: Japanese Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area*. "Japanese Air Operations in Philippines, December 1941." [http://www.army.mil/cmh/books/wwii/MacArthurReports/MacArthur V2 P1/pic-84.jpg](http://www.army.mil/cmh/books/wwii/MacArthurReports/MacArthur%20P1/pic-84.jpg).



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